THE SONG OF DEIRDRA

KING BYRGE AND HIS BROTHERS

AND

OTHER BALLADS

BY

GEORGE BORROW

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION
1913

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THE SONG OF DEIRDRA

FAREWELL, grey Albyn, much loved land,
I ne'er shall see thy hills again;
Upon those hills I oft would stand
And view the chase sweep o'er the plain.

'Twas pleasant from their tops I ween
To see the stag that bounding ran;
And all the rout of hunters keen,
The sons of Usna in the van.

The chiefs of Albyn feasted high,
Amidst them Usna's children shone;
And Nasa kissed in secrecy
The daughter fair of high Dundron.

To her a milk-white doe he sent,
With little fawn that frisked and played
And once to visit her he went,
As home from Inverness he strayed.

The news was scarcely brought to me
When jealous rage inflamed my mind ;
I took my boat and rushed to sea,
For death, for speedy death, inclined.

But swiftly swimming at my stern
Came Ainlie bold and Ardan tall ;
Those faithful striplings made me turn
And brought me back to Nasa's hall.

Then thrice he swore upon his arms,
His burnished arms, the foeman's bane,
That he would never wake alarms
In this fond breast of mine again.

Dundron's fair daughter also swore,
And called to witness earth and sky,
That since his love for her was o'er
A maiden she would live and die.

Ah did she know that slain in fight,
He wets with gore the Irish hill,
How great would be her moan this night,
But greater far would mine be still.

THE DIVER

A BALLAD TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

" WHERE is the man who will dive for his King,
In the pool as it rushes with turbulent sweep ?
A cup from this surf-beaten jetty I fling,
And he who will seek it below in the deep,
And will bring it again to the light of the day,
As the meed of his valour shall bear it away.

" Now courage, my knights, and my warriors bold,
For, one, two, and three, and away it shall go—"
He toss'd, as he said it, the goblet of gold
Deep, deep in the howling abysses below.—
' Where is the hero who ventures to brave
The whirl of the pool, and the break of the
wave ? "

The steel-coated lancemen, and nobles around,
Spoke not, but they trembled in silent surprise,
And pale they all stood on the cliff's giddy bound,
And no one would venture to dive for the prize.
"Three times have I spoke, but no hero will spring
And dive for the goblet, and dive for the King."

But still they were silent and pale as before,
Till a brave son of Eirin, in venturous pride,
Dash'd forth from the lancemen's trembling corps
And canted his helm, cast his mantle aside,
While spearman, and noble, and lady, and knight,
Gazed on the bold stripling in breathless affright.

Unmoved by the thoughts of his horrible doom,
He mounted the cliff—and he paus'd on his leap,
For the waves which the pool had imbibed in its
womb
Were spouted in thunder again from the deep,—
Yes! as they return'd, their report was as loud
As the peal when it bursts from the storm-riven
cloud.

It roared, and it drizzled, it hiss'd and it whirl'd,
And it bubbled like water when mingled with flame,
And columns of foam to the heaven were hurl'd,
And billow on billow tumultuously came;
It seem'd that the womb of the ocean would bear
Sea over sea to the uppermost air.

It thundered again as the wave gather'd slow,
And black from the drizzling foam as it fell,
The mouth of the fathomless tunnel below
Was seen like the pass to the regions of hell;
The waters roll round it, and gather and boom,
And then all at once disappear in the gloom.

And now ere the waves had returned from the deep,
The youth wiped the sweat-drops which hung on his brows,
And he plunged—and the cataracts over him sweep,
And a shout from his terrified comrades arose;
And then there succeeded a horrible pause
For the whirlpool had clos'd its mysterious jaws.

And stiller it grew on the watery waste,
In the womb of the ocean it bellow'd alone,
The knights said their Aves in terrified haste,
And crowded each pinnacle, jetty, and stone:
"The high-hearted stripling is whelm'd in the tide,
Ah! wail him," was echoed from every side.

"If the monarch had buried his crown in the pool
And said: 'He shall wear it who brings it again,'
I would not have been so insensate a fool
As to dive when all hope of returning were vain;
What heaven conceals in the gulfs of the deep,
Lies buried for ever, and there it must sleep."

Full many a burden the whirlpool had borne,
And spouted it forth on the drizzling surge,
But nought but a mast that was splinter'd and torn,
Or the hull of a vessel was seen to emerge;
But wider and wider it opens its jaws,
And louder it gurgles, and louder it draws.

It drizzled, it thunder'd, it hiss'd and it whirl'd,
And it bubbled like water when mingled with flame,
And columns of foam to the heaven were hurl'd,
And flood upon flood from the deep tunnel came;
And then with a noise like the storm from the North,
The hellish eruption was vomited forth.

But, ah! what is that on the wave's foamy brim,
Disgorged with an ocean of wreck and of wood?
'Tis the snow-white arm and the shoulder of him
Who daringly dived for the glittering meed:
'Tis he, 'tis the stripling so hardy and bold,
Who swings in his left hand the goblet of gold.

He draws a long breath as the breaker he leaves,
Then swims through the water with many a strain,
While all his companions exultingly heave
Their voices above the wild din of the main:
"'Tis he, O! 'tis he, from the horrible hole
The brave one has rescued his body and soul."

He reach'd the tall jetty, and kneeling he laid
The massy gold goblet in triumph and pride
At the foot of the monarch, who instantly made
A sign to his daughter who stood by his side :
She fill'd it with wine, and the youth with a spring
Received it, and quaff'd it, and turn'd to the King.

"Long life to the monarch! how happy are
they
Who breathe and exist in the sun's rosy light,
But he who is doom'd in the ocean to stray,
Views nothing around him but horror and night ;
Let no one henceforward be tempted like me
To pry in the secrets contain'd in the sea.

I felt myself seized, with the quickness of thought
The whirlpool entomb'd me in body and limb,
And billow on billow tumultuously brought
It's cataracts o'er me ; in vain did I swim,
For like a mere pebble with horrible sound
The force of the double stream twisted me
round.

But God in his mercy, for to him alone
In the moment of danger I ever have clung,
Did bear me towards a projection of stone:
I seized it in transport, and round it I hung,
The goblet lay too on a corally ledge,
Which jutted just over the cataract's edge.

And then I look'd downward, and horribly deep,
And twinkling sheen in the darkness below,
And though to the hearing it ever might sleep,
Yet still the eye clouded with terror might know,
That serpents and creatures that made my blood
cool,
Were swimming and splashing about in the pool.

Ball'd up to a mass, in a moment uncoil'd,
They rose, and again disappear'd in the dark,
And down in the billows which over them boil'd
I saw a behemoth contend with a shark;
The sounds of their hideous duel awaken
The black-bellied whale, and the slumbering
craken.

Still, still did I linger forlorn, and oppress'd
With a feeling of terror that curdled my blood;
Ah think of a human and sensible breast
Enclosed with the hideous shapes of the flood;
Still, still did I linger, but far from the reach
Of those that I knew would await on the beach.

Methought that a serpent towards me did creep,
And trailing behind him whole fathoms of length,
He open'd his jaws; and I dropp'd from the steep
Round which I had clung with expiring strength:
'Twas well that I did so, the stream bore me up,
And here is thy servant, and there is the cup."

He then was retiring, a look from the King
Detain'd him: "My hero, the cup is thine own,
'Tis richly thy meed, but I'll give thee this ring,
Beset with a diamond and chrysolite stone,
If again thou wilt dive, and discover to me
What's hid in the deepest abyss of the sea."

The daughter heard that with compassionate
thought,
Quick, quick to the feet of the monarch she flew :
" O father, desist from this horrible sport,
He has done what no other would venture to do,
If the life of a creature thou fain must destroy,
Let a noble take place of this generous boy."

The monarch has taken the cup in his hand,
And tumbled it down in the bellowing sea :
"And if thou canst bring it again to the strand,
The first, and the best of my knights thou shalt be ;
If that will not tempt thee, this maid thou shalt
wed,
And share as a husband the joys of her bed."

Then the pride of old Eirin arose in his look,
And it flash'd from his eye-balls courageously
keen,
One glance on the beautiful vision he took,
And he saw her change colour, and sink on the
green.
"By the stool of Saint Peter the prize I'll obtain ;"
He shouted, and instantly dived in the main.

The waters sunk down, and a thundering peal
Announced that the time of their sojourn was
o'er ;
Each eye is cast downward in terrified zeal,
As forth from the tunnel the cataracts pour.
The waters rush up, and the waters subside ;
But ah ! the bold diver remains in the tide.

KING BYRGE AND HIS BROTHERS

DAME INGEBORG three brave brothers could
boast,
For the crown of Sweden their lives they lost.

The nobles to Sweden would fain away,
Dame Ingeborg bade them at home to stay.

Dame Ingeborg stood at Helsingborg's gate,
"Dear brothers, go not, I beg and entreat!"

Then with one voice the brothers cried:
"We've long for our realms paternal sighed.

"And we have too long with thee remained,
Our hearts within us are sorely pained."

"Five days with me, dear brothers, wait,
Whilst I my dreadful dream relate.

"Methought that your mantles were of lead,
With them, dear brothers, ye were arrayed.

"They were fast tied about your throats,
And treachery towards ye that denotes."

To Dame Ingeborg's rede no ear they lent,
But to Sweden that very same day they went.

And when they had won to the sand beach white,
There met them Brouk, that faithless knight.

"Ye brothers both, thrice welcome be,
Ye'll come and drink Yule with His Majesty?"

The nobles repair to Nykoping street,
There they a deceitful counsel meet.

"Now off your bodies your armour lay,
And hie to the castle in court dress gay."

In at the doorway the nobles stepped,
Up to receive them the monarch leapt.

"My dear brothers both, thrice welcome be,
Will ye drink Yule with our Majesty?"

With his brothers down sate King Byrge to food,
Much serious discourse betwixt them ensued.

"Now welcome, my brothers, thrice welcome I say,
May I not alone the country sway?"

"May God to our brother grant happiness,
But he cannot alone the land to possess."

The nobles they ate and they drank for a trice,
Brouk has discovered another device:

"What will ye now do, ye worshipful knights,
Have drinking and dancing for ye delights?"

Then they danced out and danced in with glee,
And Brouk the clear wine poured so free.

On the floor stood the nobles and 'gan to sing,
Whilst Brouk proceeded to plot with the King.

Then unto his brother Duke Valdemar said:
"O Erik, we drink too much wine, I'm afraid.

"Be we on our guard 'gainst Brouk's pleasantries,
He knoweth all manner of villanies."

Duke Erik held up his good right hand:
"Shall we fear aught in our fatherland?

"We are come with a safety assurance fair,
And of no quarrel are we aware."

They drank and they danced till the day had
ta'en flight,
Then illumined was torch and big wax light.

To hie now to bed the nobles desired,
And repose on the bolsters their bodies tired.

Then in to the prison tower they were led,
The King himself went in his cloak of red.

They thought that in jest the thing was done,
'Till he slammed the doors to every one.

Manlike fought Erik and scorned to yield,
As long as he'd sword or a post to wield.

Broke sword! broke post! they no more could
defend!
Into prison they naked were forced to wend.

The noble brothers suffered sore,
From frost and from cold and from hunger
much more.

"We'll give thee, Brouk, the gold so red,
If thou'lt give us but water and bread."

"Ye shall not obtain in Sweden here,
Or bread or water your hearts to cheer."

"Our dear brother's wife we are confident,
To let us be starved will ne'er consent.

"We know the Queen has a pitying breast,
She will straw send us whereon to rest.

"The hunger within us is sharp and strong,
Our hearts must certainly burst ere long."

Then Brouk at that word so wrathful grew,
The keys he into the salt fiord threw.

Twas dismal to hear how with hunger they roared,
Each others shoulders they devoured.

And there is yet more woe to relate,
The flesh from the sides of each other they ate.

Much misery and woe there was that tide,
In each other's arms the brothers died.

And thus things stood till five months were fled,
King Byrge came home from the war-field red.

"Now whither departed are brothers mine?
Why didst thou not give them their fill of wine?"

Then answered straight the little child:
"Brouk into the tower the nobles beguiled."

King Byrge peeped in the window through,
The state of the brothers was piteous to view.

"Now hear thou, Brouk, straight to me declare,
Where the prison keys are I gave to thy care?"

"May the blessed Christ my soul ne'er save,
If I cast them not in the briny wave."

"O Brouk, shame fall thy head upon,
So evilly towards me thou has done.

"Thou fool and villain! I've lost thereby
The keys to Sweden's sovereignty."

"If I have betrayed thy brothers twain,
Thou mayest alone over Sweden reign."

That deed such grief to the Dukes' friends gave,
And that grief they carried to the grave.

With his Queen King Byrge must fly from his
throne,
Beheaded was Magnus, his beautiful son.

But Brouk to the infamous wheel was consigned,
May all such traitors a like end find!

When sovereigns many there are to a land,
You'll never see them go hand in hand.

The one 'fore the other must certainly fall,
Not seldom destruction comes o'er them all.

Though fraud and deceit for a time have success,
At length on their owner they'll bring distress.

TURKISH HYMN TO MAHOMET

O Envoy of Allah, to thee be salaam,
With my whole heart I love thee, O blest be thy name.
At the high throne of God thou for sinners dost plead
Who forgives for thy sake each iniquitous deed.
O Prophet of Allah, for all that I've done
Of rebellion against Him, tis thou must atone.
For Thou art the one intercessor, Thou, Thou—
The prince of the prophets to whom the rest bow.
In the world's Judgment Day when all nations are met,
When good deeds and bad in the balance are set,
Intercession I hope for, from Thee, only Thee,
So breathe intercession for me, wretched me.

'Tis true my misdeeds I'm unable to count,
But I know that thy goodness exceeds their amount.
Like one who's defunct I a long time have been,
My body is drowned in an ocean of sin.
My rebellions they be of so dreadful a die
That to wend to my Maker no courage have I.
Now save I in dust at thy feet myself throw,
And thy footstool I strike with my agonis'd brow ;
And save thou for me dost benignantly speak,
What for me will remain but despairing to shriek ?
For unless I thy kind intercession procure,
My soul with the Kaffirs will torments endure.
But I trust thou wilt that for thy servant employ'
And that rest I shall gain, and unspeakable joy.
Unto thee without end shall be praises and prayers,
And also to them, thy disciples and heirs,
The voyagers noble who trod the true road,
And to others the path of salvation who show'd,
The four eldest friends of exalted degree
Who of our religion the four pillars be.

First of all the good King of the Kingdom of Grace,
The just Abon Bekir with truth in his face ;
The next the stout lion so bravely who warr'd,
The Lyon of the Mussulman, Omar my Lord.
The third a high Emir, renowned midst our clan,
The child of the moment, the Emir Othman.
The fourth of the pillars, my Lord Ali dear,
Inspector acute of the dark and the clear.
Then the light of our eyes, the delectable twain,
The Lovely Prince Hassan, the Emir Hoseyn.
Nor unnoticed by men shall be suffered to pass
Those excellent uncles, Hanozah and Abbess.
Unto each of that band be a thousand salaams,
An bless'd through all ages be each of their names.

LONDON :
Printed for THOMAS J. WISE, Hampstead, N.W.
Edition limited to Thirty Copies.

BROWN WILLIAM

THE POWER OF THE HARP

AND

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BROWN WILLIAM

This ballad was written in consequence of the execution of William Christian, generally called William Donn, or Brown William, from the darkness of his complexion, who was shot at Hango Hill, near Castletown, in the Isle of Man, shortly after the Restoration, for alleged treason to the Derby family, who long possessed the sovereignty of Man. . . . The ballad of "Brown William," which gives an account of the betrayal of the poor patriot, and the vengeance taken by the hand of God upon his murderers, is the most popular of all the wild songs of Ellan Vannin.

LET no one in greatness too confident be,
Nor trust in his kindred, though high their degree;
For envy and rage will lay any man low:
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe.

Thou wast the Receiver of Mona's fair state,
Thy conduct was noble, thy wisdom was great,
And ne'er of thy rule did she weariness show:
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe.

Thy right hand was Earley, and Theah thy right eye ;
Thy state caused thy foemen with rage to swell high ;
And envy and rage will lay any man low:
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe.

How blest thy condition in fair Ronaldsway !
Thy mansion, how stately ! thy garden, how gay !
But oh ! what disasters from envy do flow :
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe.

'Twas said at thy trial, by men void of faith,
The king, by a letter, demanded thy death ;
The jury was frighten'd, and dared not say "No !"
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe.

The clan of wild Colcad could ne'er be at rest
Whilst the race of Christeen their own acres possess'd ;
And envy and spite will bring any man low :
Thy murder Brown William, fills Mona with woe.

A band of adulterers, curst and unholy,
For Ronaldsway lust, as they did for Logh Molley;
Of Naboth, the tragedy's played here anew:
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe.

Not one of the band but received his just meed,
Who acted a part in that damnable deed;
To dwindle away the whole band was not slow:
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe.

To Callaghyn-doo, and to Vannyster roam,
And call on the Colcad till hoarse ye become;
Gone, gone is the name so well known long ago:
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe.

A cripple was Robin for many years long,
Who troubled and bullied the island when strong;
His own friends of tending him weary did grow:
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe.

Sly Richard took ship with thy blood on his hand,
But God can avenge on the sea as on land ;
The waves would not bear him, but whelm'd him, I trow :
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe.

And now, if a few of the seed do remain,
They're vile as the thistles and briars or the plain ;
They ply for their neighbours the pick and the hoe :
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe.

Should ye walk through all Man you'll find no one, I reckon,
To mourn for the name that was once in Beemachan ;
But thousands of poor who rejoice that 'tis low :
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe.

Proceed to Creganyn, and Balla-logh green,
But where's there a Colcad to bid ye walk in?
By strangers their homes and their lands are
held now:
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with
woe.

Great Scarlett, in wealth who dwelt down by the
bay,
Must toil now with paupers for sixpence a-day;
And oft, as I've heard, has no morsel to chew:
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with
woe.

The band by whose weapons the great Cæsar
died
Were hunted by foes, and all peace were denied;
Not one died the death of kind Nature, O, no!
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with
woe.

So it fared with the band by whom Willie did
die,
Their lands are a waste, their names stink to the
sky;

They melted like rime in the ruddy sun's glow :
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe.

But comfort I take, for 'tis common report
There are shoots of dear Will who are sitting at court,
Who have punished his foes by king's mandate, although
Thy murder, Brown William, fills Mona with woe.

O, 'tis pleasant to think, when one's wither'd and grey,
There's race of Brown William in fair Ronalds-way,
That his foemen are crush'd, and their faces can't show,
While the clan of Christeen have no trouble or woe.*

* Here the old ballad—I speak of the original Manx—concludes. The two following stanzas are comparatively modern.

To the counsellors false, both in church and in state,
Bear the public of Mona both loathing and hate,
Who set man against man, and the peace would break now,
As thy murder, Brown William, broke hearts long ago.

The lord of our island, Duke Athol the great,
They would gladly persuade, with their parle and their prate,
The corner-stones high of his house to lay low,
And to King, Duke and Mona are foemen, I trow.

THE POWER OF THE HARP

SIR PETER would forth from the castle ride,
Grieving and weeping did sit his young bride.
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

"Art grieving for saddle, or steed black or white,
Or because I have wed thee art thou in this plight?"
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

"I grieve not for saddle, or steed black or white,
Nor because thou hast wed me am I in this plight."
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

"Dost sorrow because little wealth I have got,
Or dost sorrow because thine equal I'm not?"
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

"I sorrow not because little of wealth thou hast got,
Nor grieve I because thou mine equal art not."
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

"Dost sorrow because thy fond father is dead,
Or dost sorrow because thou'rt no longer a maid?"
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

"I grieve not because my dear father is dead,
Nor sorrow I because that I am not a maid."
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

"I grieve and I weep, and to grieve I have need,
I know but too well what for me is decreed."
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

"For the bridge, the broad bridge, I sorrow much more,
For oh! my five sisters together fell o'er."
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

"I think of the stream, and I sorrow much more,
My sisters sank in it and never rose more."
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

"My dearest, my dearest, cast sorrow aside,
Before thee shall twelve of my merry men ride."
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

"Before thee shall twelve of my merry men speed,
And I will myself hold the reins of thy steed."
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

And when they arrived in the green forest shade
A hart they beheld at gold tables that played.
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

All stopped at the strange brown hart to take heed,
And allowed the young bride by herself to proceed.
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

And as the broad bridge she went galloping o'er,
Stumbled her steed on his golden shoes four.
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

Golden shoes four, each with golden nails three,
And the bride was cast into the boiling sea.
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

Sir Peter he turned at her terrified cry,
But the bride she had sunk 'neath the waters high.
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

He called to his men as their hands they wring:
"Bring quickly my harp with the golden string!"
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

Sir Peter began with such sweetness to play,
That the birds all sang as they sat on the spray.
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

The Merman rose from the depths of the sea,
And the fair young bride by the hand led he.
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

"Sir Peter, Sir Peter, thy playing give o'er,
Thy beautiful bride to thy arms I restore."
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

"For my bonny bride only I will not give o'er,
Her five sisters also thou must restore."
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

Anew 'gan Sir Peter so sweetly to play,
That the birds came down from their seat on the spray.
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

The Merman arose from the depth of the sea,
Five pretty maids by the hand led he.
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

"Sir Peter, Sir Peter, thy playing give o'er,
For in truth have I now no maidens more."
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

From her anguish now is the Lady free,
In the arm of Sir Peter each night sleeps she.
Belov'd of my heart, wherefore sorrowest thou so?

THE UNFORTUNATE MARRIAGE

HILDEBRAND gave his sister away,
Causing her many a mournful day.

She was given away and evilly wed,
Joy from her bosom quickly fled.

On Sunday she was a graceful bride,
On Monday a prisoner sad she sigh'd.

"O what, my Lord, have I done to thee?"
"Woman, I had no gold with thee.

"This have I, Dame, to say to thee,
Thou brought'st no silver home to me."

"Thou knowest I brought thee as my dower
Eight full coffers to thy bower.

"Two filled with silver, white to see,
And two with gold so ruddy of blee.

"Two filled with sable and mard skins rare,
And two with pelts of deer and of bear.

"Upon thy father I bestow'd
Gilded saddle and courser proud.

"Upon thy mother did I bestow
Scarlet to place her feet below.

"To thy brother a ship from off the wave,
To your sister gold from my breast I gave.

"All thy courtiers I have dight
With little shirts as ivory white.

"No serving lass in the house is there
But I gave her silk to snood her hair.

"With what, my Lord, canst me upbraid,
And why in durance am I laid?"

"Woman, to thee I've this to say,
Thy brothers my father slew in fray."

"If my brothers a deed so dire did dare,
I in that deed did in no ways share.

"And thou for thy father's death wast paid
Seven tons of silver, and golden braid.

"What more, my Lord, canst thou require,
To remove from me thy anger dire?"

"Woman, with this I thee upbraid,
Thou cam'st not into my bed a maid."

"So lend me, God, in my trouble aid,
As I came into thy bed a maid!

"And may God never give me grace,
If I came not a maid to thy embrace."

"To-day thou shalt sit within and mourn,
To-morrow at dawn on faggots burn."

There she sits and her hands she wrings,
Till she heard the clang of the Raven's wings.

"O Raven, Raven, stay thy wing,
Can'st thou the tune of the watchman sing?"

" O well can I, and well I ought,
So little was I when the tune I caught."

" Wilt fly for me, Raven, to Tonne town,
For there my friends and kindred wone?

" I'll give thee, Raven, a red gold band,
To carry my message to Hildebrand.

" A red gold band I'll give to thee,
To tell him the tale of my misery."

" Thy gold will do me little good,
Dearer to me my raven food."

" O Raven, if thou wilt fly for me,
My husband's eyes shall be thy fee."

Abroad his black wings the Raven threw,
And over three kingly realms he flew.

The Raven into the chamber sped,
Where Hildebrand drank the wine so red.

" Hear thou, Hildebrand the young,
Thy sister's into durance flung.

" Here art thou sitting and drinking wine,
To-morrow they'll burn sweet sister thine."

Hildebrand sprang the table o'er,
Dashing the wine on the marble floor.

Hildebrand hies him into the stall,
There he beholds the coursers all.

He viewed the brown, and the gray as well,
On the black he laid the gilded selle.

" Blacklille, Blacklille, if me thou'lt bear,
Thou on winnowed wheat all thy days shalt fare."

" Then willingly, willingly, thee I'll bear,
But to breathe my name thou must not dare."

He placed himself Blacklille's back upon,
And across the sea then away he ran.

And when to the midst of the Sound they came,
He in evil hour uttered Blacklille's name.

Blacklille quickly swam to the land,
But down to the bottom sank Hildebrand.

On the Ting stood the damsel at break of day,
Then heard she afar off Blacklille neigh.

Blacklille ran towards the Ting in wrath,
Back scattered both women and men from
his path.

Blacklille he kicked, the Raven he hewed,
With the blood of men was his beak embrued.

Black took on his back the fair young dame,
He went from the Ting and with her was tame.

And when they reached the yellow sand,
Upon it was standing Hildebrand.

"Welcome, sweet Kirsten, dear sister mine,
Why is so pallid that cheek of thine?"

"The reason my cheek so pale is seen,
Is because I've far from my dear home been."

"Now let no honest man," she said,
"Into foreign lands his daughter wed.

"Of gold perhaps he may get a store,
But her happiness goeth for evermore."

Hildebrand kissed her o'er and o'er :
" My darling sister, pray sorrow no more.

" Kirsten, I pray thee, pardon me
For bringing thee into this misery."

Then spake Blacklille as he stood :
" I've saved thee by shedding human blood.

" Give me, Kirsten, one little kiss,
And the Raven one on that beak of his."

On their mouths she kissed them both with glee—
From hideous thrall were they both set free.

She kissed them both with good will, I ween,
They changed to her brothers who lost had been.

They all pressed her fondly to their breast,
From sorrow and woe she is now at rest.

THE WRESTLING-MATCH

As one day I wandered lonely, in extreme
distress of mind,
I a pleasant garden entered, hoping comfort
there to find.
Up and down I paced the garden till an open
space I spied,
There I saw a crowd of people, and I heard a
voice that cried :
" Come and see what Love is doing, here is Love
performing more
Wondrous feats than e'er were witnessed at
Olympian games of yore :
This he conquers, that he conquers, young and
old before him lie,
Great and small alike he conquers, none with
him a fall must try.

Hearing this at once I entered 'midst the crowd collected there,
Some of whom no doubt were eager like myself to banish care.
I would fain behold this being, this same wondrous lad survey,
Who 'twas said in each encounter bore with ease the prize away.
Quickly I the crowd divided, soon I pierced the multitude,
And this Love stood full before me, and what think you 'twas I view'd?
Why a boy, a little darling, full of captivating grace,
Rather roguish were his glances, but how lovely was his face!

Soon as I beheld this warrior gibings I began to throw
At the wretches who had suffered fell defeat from such a foe.

Then, to me his visage turning, of the conquered standing by
One replied, and in replying tears he shed abundantly:
"O, poor youth," 'twas thus he answered, "little, little dost thou know
That in coming here thou comest not to joy, but bitter woe.
Tears, and pains, and wounds most ghastly, wounds for which there is no cure,
Every kind of evil treatment such as no one can endure."

When these words I heard him utter I was filled with bitter rage,
And forthwith made preparation with the warrior to engage.
"Hearken, Master Love," I shouted, "from this spot stir not away,
You and I must have a battle, must engage in deadly fray;

That it may be known for certain which is
strongest of us two."
Then into the arena bounding there I stood in
all men's view,
In the midst of it expecting firm the onset of
the foe,
Doubting not should he attack me him at once
to overthrow.
Love he was not slow to follow with a blythe
and joyous air,
Crying out, "My dearest fellow, for the fight
yourself prepare!
Round the waist each other clasping now let's
strive like wrestlers true,
Do your best and I will show you what young
Master Love can do."

Then around the waist I clasped him, he his
arms around me wound,
Long we hugged and hugged each other, each
his match in t'other found.

Said at length the urchin to me: "Sadly tired,
friend, am I,
Very much fatigued and weary, really friend
just fit to die.
Therefore take from me, I prythee, what thou
anxiously hast sought,
And for which in this arena with me gallantly
hast fought."

Then a blast of wild consuming fire he breathed
into my breast,
Straight my breast it quick enkindled, all
deprived was I of rest,
Then he ran away exulting to some other
wretched wight,
Such a zest he has for conflict, in such fray is
his delight.

As for me I fell half senseless on the fatal, fatal
spot,
Fierce consuming fire within me, never sure was
one so hot.

Rising up I followed shrieking, "Oh have mercy, Love, on me!
See my tears, my sad affliction, cure me of my misery!"

Then he cried, "Dost not remember all the boasts thy lips out-pour'd?
Know henceforth in every region Love is Conqueror and Lord."

Thus he cried, and proudly left me, and wherever now I rove,
I reproach myself for thinking I could vanquish mighty Love.

THE WARRIOR

From the Arabic.

THOU lov'st to look on myrtles green,
And the narcissus bright of hue;
I love the blaze of sabres keen,
I love the dagger's flash to view.

Thou, thou may'st drink the rosy wine
From golden goblets sculptured o'er;
From foemen's skulls the joy be mine
To drink my foemen's reeking gore.

London
Printed for THOMAS J. WISE, Hampstead, N.W.
Edition limited to Thirty Copies.

FINNISH ARTS

OR

SIR THOR AND DAMSEL THURE

A BALLAD

BY

GEORGE BORROW

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION
1913

FINNISH ARTS

OR

SIR THOR AND DAMSEL THURE

Finnish Arts

Sir Thor and Damsel Thure:

1

Sir Thor was a knight of prowess tried,
The son of a King in [illegible]
With Damsel [illegible] him away.

He was a knight excell'd by none.
[illegible] such deeds [illegible] he'd done.
With Damsel [illegible]

He was a knight [illegible] and good.
[illegible] in [illegible]

[illegible] and [illegible] serv'd he the Emperor,
And [illegible] all his [illegible]

King of Norroway was his sire.
[illegible] the world [illegible]

He was a King both aged and gray,
He [illegible] his son from home away.
[illegible] from home away,
That he might aid him [illegible]
[illegible] Sir Thor.
[illegible]

"Hail Emperor [illegible] and [illegible]!
My [illegible] to return to my father I [illegible]."

"[illegible]
And [illegible] remain."

The [illegible]
They [illegible] him all [illegible]

When Sir Thor came from Norroway to his own countrie,
His [illegible] him [illegible]

His dear son [illegible] he would [illegible]
~~And he [illegible]~~

~~[illegible]~~ [illegible],
[illegible] a maiden with him to [illegible].

They [illegible] with [illegible],
[illegible]

~~They [illegible]~~
~~[illegible]~~

And when they reach'd [illegible].
[illegible]

a virtuous knight

He faithfully [illegible]

To help him Norroway land to [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

shall [illegible]

[illegible] all the [illegible] return again

[illegible]
[illegible] with him [illegible]

[illegible] with all [illegible]

They [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

father

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FINNISH ARTS
OR
SIR THOR AND DAMSEL THURE.

Sir Thor was a knight of prowess tried,
The son of a king he was beside.

He was a knight excelled by none,
At home such deeds of might he'd done.

And not alone in his native home,
But manhood had he displayed at Rome.

He faithfully served the emperor,
And hatred to all his foes he bore.

King of Norroway was his sire,
His fame spreads over the world entire.

He was a King both aged and grey,
So he summoned his son from Rome away.

He summoned his son from Rome away,
To help him Norway's land to sway.

As soon as the tidings reached Sir Thor,
He hied to the Roman Emperor.

"Hail, Emperor Ludvig, great and brave!
Thy leave to return to my sire I crave."

"Freely shalt thou permission gain,
And thy post shall vacant for thee remain."

He greeted all the knightly train,
They begged him quickly return again.

When from Rome he came to his own countrie,
His father welcomed him heartilie.

His dear son married he fain would see,
And divide with him his domain would he.

He envoys sends with all despatch
To seek a maid with his son to match.

They travelled wide with unwearied mind
Before his equal they could find.

O'er land and sea so wide they speed,
Until they reached the land of Swede.

And when they reached the Swedish State,
They found one worthy to be his mate.

Damsel Thura the maiden hight,
In Swedish land was none so bright.

The loveliest maiden in all the land,
Her father was high Sir Sallemand.

He was a noble rich and great,
His equal was not in Sweden's State.

So glad to Norroway back they wend,
That the matter be brought to a happy end.

They the tidings to their lord declare
That they had found a damsel rare.

No fairer was in the Swede countrie,
Nor in all the isles there round that be.

The heart of Sir Thor with joy beat loud
When they described the damsel proud.

He spoke to his men, so gallant and stout,
Who were to attend him in his rout :

"We must quickly away, so ready make,
I've sworn an oath I dare not break,

"As soon as the lovely rose was found,
To her o'er land and sea to bound."

They hoisted their sails on the yard so high,
And out of the haven away they fly.

So gay thence sailed they every one,
To Sweden in less than a month they won.

The noble he steered his ship to the land,
Sir Thor was the first who stepped on the sand

The knight he sprang on his courser red:
"God help us now to this lovely maid."

As they through the land of Sweden hied,
The folks received them with joy and pride.

To Sir Sallemand's house came Sir Thor on his steed,
Erect in his sables stood the Swede.

"Here stand'st thou, Sir Sallemand, gallantly dight,
Say, wilt thou house me with thee to-night?"

"As one from God thou shalt welcome be,
Respect and honour I pay to thee."

To the hall of the women Sir Thor led they,
His eyes fell straight on the lovely may.

They washed their hands and to table went,
With the music and talk were they well content.

And when they had feasted all so free,
They cried for chess to increase their glee.

"Sir Sallemand, listen to what I say,
May I at chess with thy daughter play?"

"Yes, thou to play with her art free,
Whether within or without I be."

The young Sir Thor and Thure the maid,
A game of chess at the table played.

The longer they played, they happier grew,
Full pleased with each other were the two.

"Hear thou, May Thure, thou lily bright,
Wilt thou with thy white hand thyself to me plight?"

"Hear thou, Sir Thor, I tell thee plain,
My faith and troth thou may'st obtain.

"My faith and troth I would plight to thee
If I knew thou would'st be true to me."

"May Christ destroy the dastard vile
Who a noble maid would ever beguile!"

She gave him her troth with her hand so fair,
But what she did more there was none aware.

From his hand a gold bracelet he unbound,
And placed it the Damsel's arm around.

"Hear me, May Thure," then said he,
"How long wilt thou tarry a maid for me?"

"I will, Sir Thor, if need there be,
For eighteen winters wait for thee."

"So long a time thou need'st not wait,
No longer a time than winters eight."

When the eight winters they were o'er
The damsel began to grieve so sore.

The damsel began to grieve so sore,
And briny tears from her eyes to pour.

A noble Duke has paid her his suit,
A hero was he, on horse and on foot.

The Duke to her royal father said :
"Wilt give me counsel thy daughter to wed ?

"And she I'll hold, till life depart,
As the only lady of my heart."

So rash a man was Sir Sallemand,
To the Duke he promised his daughter's hand.

"I'll give my daughter to thy good hand,
She never shall go into Norroway land.

"Sir Thor shall never behold the day,
That he with her shall Norway sway."

The Damsel Thure pined so sore,
And the tears afresh down her cheeks did pour.

To the castle bridge she wends her way,
And watches the ships in the sound that lay.

Their sails both brown and white she viewed,
And them with her fingers small she sewed.

"I sewed like sails with these fingers of mine,
Perhaps Sir Thor yonder ploughs the brine."

So she lamented in piteous guise,
But no one heard the maiden's cries.

"To his true love each lad comes home,
And why not mine across the foam?

"O would to Christ I had a friend,
That I to the shore a message might send.

"I'd give him presents rich and fair,
If he would in secret my message bear."

Straight then answered the little foot-boy:
"Thy message I'll bear to the strand with joy."

The boy he ran to the yellow sand,
Sir Thor was steering his ship to the land.

Sir Thor was the first who stepped to shore,
To him his message the foot-boy bore.

"How speed the folk on this island, say?
How speeds fair Thure, my plighted may?"

"O well doth she speed through heaven's grace,
To-morrow her bridal will take place.

"She's betrothed to a Duke of high degree,
Live and die with her will he."

"Ere he shall gain my betrothèd may,
I'll have with that Duke a bloody fray."

His cloak of sable he o'er him throws,
And unto Sir Sallemand's hall he goes.

He took the shining chess-table of gold,
And into the high hall strode he bold.

"Is there any man this hall within,
Who at chess with me a game can win?

"Who a game at chess can skilfully play,
And win a foreigner's gold away?"

All then sate so hushed and still,
None save May Thure would prove their skill.

But Damsel Thure, she answered free :
" Yes, I will at chess-table play with thee."

May Thure covered her golden head,
And unto her father she is sped.

" Here thou sitt'st and drink'st wine from the shell,
And may I sit down at chess-table ?

" At the table a game of chess to play,
Will help to beguile the longsome day."

" Yes, by the Saints ! my daughter bright,
At chess thou may'st play from now till night.

" At chess to play thou, my girl, art free,
Whether within or without I be."

Thereto her mother answer made,
In evil arts she was deeply read :

" Of Sir Thor the powerful have thou care,
Lest he at chess-table thee ensnare.

" Do thou with thy maids in thy bower stay,
At tables of gold thou shalt not play."

But the maid no ear to her mother lent,
To play at tables away she went.

The first game on the board they played
Was won by Thure, the lily maid.

"The eagle flies across the moor,
He heeds but little the tempest's roar.

"All that he findeth he swalloweth,
How like to a woman devoid of faith!"

"O do not cast such reproach at me,
Remember I waited eight years for thee."

"Hear thou, Damsel, what word I say
Wilt follow me now to Norroway?"

"I'll follow thee gladly to Norroway's land,
If I with thee can reach the strand."

The Damsel she was a lily flower,
She followed Sir Thor to the rugged shore.

He took her tenderly by the waist,
And on the gilt prow the Damsel placed.

Sir Thor spread his sail on the yard-arm good,
And out to the open sea he stood.

The wind filled bravely the silken sail,
The ship sprang lightly before the gale.

Sir Thor he waved his hat with delight,
"Bid ye, Sir Sallemand, a long good night

"And tell the Duke, when he comes to wed,
That Thor has taken his plighted maid."

A messenger swift Sir Sallemand hailed:
"Away with thy daughter Sir Thor has sailed!"

To that Sir Sallemand replied:
"She was his own betrothed bride."

But her mother said with a grimly frown:
"They soon shall sink to the bottom down.

"For I will cause a storm to blow,
Shall make them both to the bottom go."

Proud Mette and her nine witches hoar,
They hurried screaming to the shore.

She waked on the sea a tempest blast,
The sand from the bottom the waves upcast.

For seven long days, and long nights seven,
Together were blended earth and heaven.

But all the mother could send for their hurt,
With ease the daughter could avert.

"O woe is me, how rash my part,
When I taught her all my secret art!"

There was none on board that tide
Who was able the ship to guide,

Save Damsel Thure, save her alone,
And of her little pages one.

"Thou little page, if thou'lt stand by me,
Full fairly I reward will thee.

"The best of scarlet thou shalt don,
And ride a noble horse upon."

"I will faithfully by thee stand,
Until in safety we gain the land."

Answers Sir Thor in the hold as he lies:
"Many suffer yet promise not in that guise.

"And many as brilliant promises give,
Yet never perform them whilst they live."

"Climb, little boy, on the mast so high,
And see if to land we are drawing nigh.

"But whether thou steppest aft or afore,
Step not, I pray, on my bridegroom Thor."

"O lady, no more of the land I see
Than the topmost bough of the good pine tree.

"No more of the pomp of the world can I
Than just the top of the oak espy."

"If the top of a tree salute thine eyes,
'Tis time to bid my bridegroom rise.

"Sir Thor, arise, and stand on the prow,
The Lord to the haven brings us now."

She steered the vessel towards the land,
Sir Thor stepped first upon the sand.

The people of Norway thronged the shore,
They welcomed so well their King, Sir Thor.

They welcomed and blest their King, Sir Thor,
But they welcomed and blest his lady more.

The Damsel he took in such gallant way,
He lifted her up on his courser gray.

He bore her to his own castle fair,
Where they did dwell devoid of care.

His bridal with speed and with joy held he,
To his own repose and to her great glee.

He embraced so fondly her dainty frame,
The crown he gave her and Queenly name.

His palace she enters to wone therein,
She dons the scarlet and ermine skin.

The scarlet she wears, and the gold-laced shoe ;
May every knight as Sir Thor prove true !

Sir Thor to his faith was steady and true,
And true to her troth was the lady too.

A NEW SONG
TO AN OLD TUNE

Who starves his wife,
  And denies her clothing ?
Bright the Shaker,
  The humbug Quaker !

Merrily danced the Quaker's wife,
  Merrily danced the Quaker ;
But the wife of Bright is too starved to dance,
  And he's too fat to caper.

He grudges the wretch a morsel of food,
  He grudges her even clothing ;
Once, 'tis said, to the cupboard she stole,
  But there to steal found nothing.

But Bright's as fat as a bacon hog,
The old outrageous sinner;
For he will stuff at any fool's cost,
Who'll ask him home to dinner.

Merrily danced the Quaker's wife,
Merrily danced the Quaker;
But the wife of Bright is too starved to dance,
And he's too fat to caper.

Who starves his wife.
And denies her clothing?
Bright the Shaker,
The humbug Quaker!

ODE
FROM ANACREON

The earth to drink does not disdain,
The trees drink of the earth full fain.

Of the light air the sea drinks free,
The red sun drinketh from the sea,

And the red sun, at pride of noon,
I've seen drunk up by the pale moon.

Then why, friend, with me prove in ire,
That I to drink too feel desire?

LINES
FROM THE ITALIAN

"Repent, O repent!" said a Friar one day
To a reprobate wretch, as expiring he lay;

"As I came up the stairs, I was frightened to see
The devil who's waiting to seize upon thee."

"You saw him then truly?" "Too truly, alas!"
"And under what shape?" "Under that of an ass."

"Well, well!" cried the sinner, "I am not afraid,
You've only been terrified by your own shade."

A DRINKING SONG

O how my breast is glowing
  When I am drinking wine;
And how my verse is flowing
  In honour of the nine.

How vanish grief and sorrow
  When I am drinking wine;
Each thought about the morrow,
  Each project and design.

Through roseate space I'm gliding
  When I am drinking wine;
My spirit 'neath the guiding
  Of Bacchus, the divine.

I crown my head with flowers
When I am drinking wine,
And say : " Almighty powers,
A quiet life be mine ! "

The air with sweets perfuming,
When I am drinking wine,
I sit with damsel blooming
Beneath a spreading vine.

No thought am I concealing
When I am drinking wine ;
My bosom's all revealing,
I sit beneath the vine.

My tongue I watch not over
When I am drinking wine ;
My heart I all discover,
And naught within confine.

London:
Printed for THOMAS J. WISE, Hampstead, N.W.

Edition limited to Thirty Copies.

A

SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER

TO

THE BIBLE IN SPAIN

Inspired by

FORD'S "HAND-BOOK FOR TRAVELLERS IN SPAIN."

BY

GEORGE BORROW

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION

1913

A

SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER

TO

THE BIBLE IN SPAIN

It was formerly our custom to read the Don 'pervasively' once every three years; we still keep up that custom *in part*, and hope to do so whilst life remains. We say *in part*, because we now conclude with the first part going no farther. We have little sympathy with the pranks ~~displayed~~ upon Sancho and his master by the Duke and Duchess, ~~which occupy a considerable portion in the second book~~; and as for the affair of Sancho's government at Barataria, it appears to us full of inconsistency and absurdity. Barataria, we are told, was a place upon the Duke's estate, consisting of ~~some~~ thousand inhabitants; and of such a place it was very possible for a nobleman to have made the poor squire governor; but we no sooner get to Barataria than we find ourselves not in a ~~hamlet~~, but in a *capital* in Madrid. The governor at night makes his rounds, attended by 'an immense watch;' he wanders from one street to another for hours; he encounters all kinds of adventures, not mock but real adventures, and all kinds of characters, not mock but real characters; there is talk of bull-circuses, theatres, gambling-houses, and such like; and all this in a ~~hamlet of one~~ thousand inhabitants, in which, by the way, nothing but a cat is ever heard stirring after eight o'clock; this we consider to be carrying the joke rather too far; and it is not Sancho but the reader who is joked with. But the first part is a widely different affair: all the scenes are admirable. Should we live a thousand years, we should never forget the impression made upon us by the ~~Don's attack upon the priest, conveying the corpse by night to Segovia~~ and by the sequel thereto, his midnight adventures in the Brown Mountain. We can only speak of these scenes as astonishing—they have never been equalled in their line. There is another wonderful book ~~on Spain~~ which describes what we may call the ~~field life~~ of Spain, as the other describes the ~~city life~~—we allude of course to Le Sage's novel, which as a whole we prefer to Don Quixote, the characters introduced being certainly more true to nature than those which appear in the other great work. Shame to Spain that she has not long since erected a statue to Le Sage, who has done so much to illustrate her; but miserable envy and jealousy have been at the bottom of the feeling ever manifested in Spain towards that illustrious name. There are some few stains in the grand work of Le Sage. He has imitated without acknowledgment three or four passages contained in the life of Obregon, a curious work, of which we have already spoken, and to which on some future occasion we may perhaps revert.

But the Hand-book? We take leave of it with the highest respect and admiration for the author; and recommend it not only to travellers in Spain, but to the public in general, as a work of a very high order, written *con amore* by a man who has devoted his whole time, talents, and all the various treasures of an extensive learning to its execution. We repeat that we were totally unprepared for such a literary treat as he has here placed before us. It is our sincere wish that at his full convenience he will favour us with something which may claim consanguinity with the present work. It hardly becomes us to point out to an author subjects on which to exercise his powers. We shall, however, take the liberty of hinting that a good history of Spain does not exist, at least in English—and that not even Shelton produced a satisfactory translation of the great gem of Spanish literature, 'The Life and Adventures of Don Quixote.'

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PREFATORY NOTE

In 1845 Richard Ford published his *Hand-Book for Travellers in Spain and Readers at Home* [2 Vols. 8vo.], a work which still commands attention, and the compilation of which is said to have occupied its author for more than sixteen years. In conformity with the wish of Ford (who had himself favourably reviewed *The Bible in Spain*) Borrow undertook to produce a study of the *Hand-Book* for *The Quarterly Review*. The following Essay was the result.

But the Essay, brilliant as it is, was not a 'Review.' Not until page 6 of the suppressed edition (p. 25 of the present edition) is reached is the *Hand-Book* even mentioned, and but little concerning it appears thereafter. Lockhart, then editing the *Quarterly*, proposed to render it more suitable for the purpose for which it had been intended by himself interpolating a series of extracts from Ford's volumes. But Borrow would tolerate no interference with his work, and promptly

withdrew the Essay, which had meanwhile been set up in type. The following letter, addressed by Lockhart to Ford, sufficiently explains the position:

London,
June 13th, 1845.

Dear Ford,

'El Gitano' sent me a paper on the "Hand-Book," which I read with delight. It seemed just another capital chapter of his "Bible in Spain," and I thought, as there was hardly a word of 'review,' and no extract giving the least notion of the peculiar merits and style of the "Hand-Book," that I could easily (as is my constant custom) supply the humbler part myself, and so present at once a fair review of the work, and a lively specimen of our friend's vein of eloquence in exordio.

But, behold! he will not allow any tampering . . . . I now write to condole with you; for I am very sensible, after all, that you run a great risk in having your book committed to hands far less competent for treating it or any other book of Spanish interest than Borrow's would have been . . . . but I consider that, after all, in the case of a new author, it is the first duty of "The Quarterly Review" to introduce that author fully and fairly to the public.

Ever Yours Truly,
J. G. Lockhart.

The action of Lockhart in seeking to amend his Essay excited Borrow's keenest indignation, and induced him to produce the following amusing squib :—

Would it not be more dignified
To run up debts on every side,
And then to pay your debts refuse,
Than write for rascally Reviews?
And lectures give to great and small,
In pot-house, theatre, and town-hall,
Wearing your brains by night and day
To win the means to pay your way?
I vow by him who reigns in [*hell*],
It would be more respectable!

This squib was never printed by Borrow. I chanced to light upon it recently in a packet of his as yet unpublished verse.

The Essay itself is far too interesting, and far too characteristic of its author, to be permitted to remain any longer inaccessible; hence the present reprint. The original is a folio pamphlet, extending to twelve numbered pages. Of this pamphlet no more than two copies would appear to have been struck off, and both are fortunately extant to-day. One of these was formerly in the possession of Dr. William J. Knapp, and is now the property of the Hispanic Society of New York. The second example is in my own library. This was Borrow's own copy, and is freely

corrected in his handwriting throughout. From this copy the present edition has been printed, and in preparing it the whole of the corrections and additions made by Borrow to the text of the original pamphlet have been adopted.

A reduced facsimile of the last page of the pamphlet serves as frontispiece to the present volume.

T. J. W.

A

SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER

TO

THE BIBLE IN SPAIN

Does Gibraltar, viewing the horrors which are continually taking place in Spain, and which, notwithstanding their frequent grotesqueness, have drawn down upon that country the indignation of the entire civilized world, never congratulate herself on her severance from the peninsula, for severed she is morally and physically? Who knows what is passing in the bosom of the old Rock? Yet on observing the menacing look which she casts upon Spain across the neutral ground, we have thought that provided she could speak it would be something after the following fashion:—

Accursed land! I hate thee; and, far from being a defence, will invariably prove a thorn in thy side, a source of humiliation and ignominy, a punishment for thy sorceries, thy abominations and idolatries—thy cruelty, thy cowardice and miserable pride; I will

look on whilst thy navies are burnt in my many bays, and thy armies perish before my eternal walls—I will look on whilst thy revenues are defrauded and ruined, and thy commerce becomes a bye word and a laughing-stock, and I will exult the while and shout —'I am an instrument in the hand of the Lord, even I, the old volcanic hill—I have pertained to the Moor and the Briton—they have unfolded their banners from my heights, and I have been content—I have belonged solely to the irrational beings of nature, and no human hum invaded my solitudes; the eagle nestled on my airy crags, and the tortoise and the sea-calf dreamed in my watery caverns undisturbed; even then I was content, for I was aloof from Spain and her sons. The days of my shame were those when I was clasped in her embraces and was polluted by her crimes; when I was a forced partaker in her bad faith, soul-subduing tyranny, and degrading fanaticism; when I heard only her bragging tongue, and was redolent of nought but the breath of her smoke-loving borrachos; when I was a prison for her convicts and a garrison for her rabble soldiery—Spain, accursed land, I hate thee: may I, like my African neighbour, become a house and a retreat only for vile baboons rather than the viler Spaniard. May I sink beneath the billows, which is my foretold fate, ere I become again a parcel of Spain—accursed land, I hate thee, and so long as I can uphold my brow will still look menacingly on Spain.'

Strong language this, it will perhaps be observed—but when the rocks speak strong language may be expected, and it is no slight matter which will set stones a-speaking. Surely, if ever there was a time for Gibraltar to speak, it is the present, and we leave it to our readers to determine whether the above is not a real voice from Gibraltar heard by ourselves one moonlight night at Algeziras, as with our hands in our pockets we stood on the pier, staring across the bay in the direction of the rock.

'Poor Spain, unfortunate Spain!' we have frequently heard Spaniards exclaim. Were it worth while asking the Spaniard a reason for anything he says or does, we should be tempted to ask him why he apostrophizes his country in this manner. If she is wretched and miserable and bleeding, has she anything but what she richly deserves, and has brought down upon her own head? By Spain we of course mean the Spanish nation—for as for the country, it is so much impassible matter, so much rock and sand, chalk and clay—with which we have for the moment nothing to do. It has pleased her to play an arrant jade's part, the part of a *mula falsa*, a vicious mule, and now, and not for the first time, the brute has been chastised—there she lies on the road amidst the dust, the blood running from her nose. Did our readers ever peruse the book of the adventures of the Squire Marcos de Obregon?* No! How should our

* Relaciones de la vida del Escudero Marcos de Obregon.

readers have perused the scarce book of the life and adventures of Obregon? never mind! we to whom it has been given to hear the voice of Gibraltar whilst standing on the pier of Algeziras one moonlight evening, with our hands in our pockets, jingling the cuartos which they contained, have read with considerable edification the adventures of the said Marcos, and will tell the reader a story out of the book of his life. So it came to pass that in one of his journeys the Señor de Obregon found himself on the back of a mule, which, to use his own expression, had the devil in her body, a regular jade, which would neither allow herself to be shod or saddled without making all the resistance in her power—was in the habit of flinging herself down whenever she came to a sandy place, and rolling over with her heels in the air. An old muleteer, who observed her performing this last prank, took pity on her rider, and said, "Gentleman student, I wish to give you a piece of advice with respect to that animal"—and then he gave Marcos the piece of advice, which Marcos received with the respect due to a man of the muleteer's experience, and proceeded on his way. Coming to a sandy place shortly after, he felt that the mule was, as usual, about to give way to her *penchant*, whereupon, without saying a word to any body, he followed the advice of the muleteer and with a halter which he held in his hand struck with all fury the jade between the two ears. Down fell the mule in the dust, and, rolling on

her side, turned up the whites of her eyes. 'And as I stood by looking at her,' said Marcos, 'I was almost sorry that I had struck her so hard, seeing how she turned up the whites of her eyes. At length, however, I took a luncheon of bread, and steeping it in wine from my bota, I thrust it between her jaws, and thus revived her; and I assure you that from that moment she never played any tricks with me, but behaved both formally and genteelly under all circumstances, but especially when going over sandy ground. I am told, however, that as soon as I parted with her she fell into her old pranks, refusing to be shod or saddled—rushing up against walls and scarifying the leg of her rider, and flinging herself down in all sandy places.' Now we say, without the slightest regard to contradiction, knowing that no one save a Spaniard will contradict us, that Spain has invariably proved herself just such a jade as the mule of the cavalier De Obregon: with a kind and merciful rider what will she not do? Look at her, how she refuses to be bridled or shod—how she scarifies the poor man's leg against rude walls, how ill she behaves in sandy places, and how occasionally diving her head between her fore-legs and kicking up behind she causes him to perform a somersault in the air to the no small discomposure of his Spanish gravity; but let her once catch a Tartar who will give her the garrote right well between the ears, and she can behave as well as any body. One of the best of her riders was Charles the

First. How the brute lay floundering in the dust on the plains of Villalar, turning up the whites of her eyes, the blood streaming thick from her dishonest nose! There she lay, the Fleming staring at her, with the garrote in his hand. That's right, Fleming! give it her again—and withhold the sopa till the very last extremity.

Then there was Napoleon again, who made her taste the garrote; she was quiet enough under him, but he soon left her and went to ride other jades, and his place was filled by those who, though they had no liking for her, had not vigour enough to bring her down on her side. She is down, however, at present, if ever she was in her life—blood streaming from her nose amidst the dust, the whites of her eyes turned up very much, whilst staring at her with uplifted garrote stands Narvaez.

Yes, there lies Spain, and who can pity her?—she could kick off the kind and generous Espartero, who, though he had a stout garrote in his hand, and knew what kind of conditioned creature she was, forbore to strike her, to his own mighty cost and damage. She kicked off him, and took up—whom? a regular muleteer, neither more nor less. We have nothing further to say about him; he is at present in his proper calling, we bear him no ill-will, and only wish that God may speed him. But never shall we forget the behaviour of the jade some two years ago. O the yell that she set up, the true mulish yell—knowing all

the time that she had nothing to fear from her rider, knowing that he would not strike her between the ears. 'Come here, you scoundrel, and we will make a bell-clapper of your head, and of your bowels a string to hang it by'—that was the cry of the Barcelonese, presently echoed in every town and village throughout Spain—and that cry was raised immediately after he had remitted the mulct which he had imposed on Barcelona for unprovoked rebellion. But the mule is quiet enough now; no such yell is heard now at Barcelona, or in any nook or corner of Spain. No, no—the Caballero was kicked out of the saddle, and the muleteer sprang up—There she lies, the brute! *Bien hecho, Narvaez*—Don't spare the garrote nor the mule!

It is very possible that from certain passages which we have written above, some of our readers may come to the conclusion that we must be partisans either of Espartero or Narvaez, perhaps of both. In such case, however, they would do us wrong. Having occasion at present to speak of Spain, we could hardly omit taking some notice of what has been lately going on in the country, and of the two principal performers in the late *funcion*. We have not been inattentive observers of it; and have, moreover, some knowledge of the country; but any such feeling as partisanship we disclaim. Of Narvaez, the muleteer, we repeat that we have nothing more to say, his character is soon read. Of the caballero—of

Espartero, we take this opportunity of observing that the opinion which we at first entertained of him, grounded on what we had heard, was anything but favourable. We thought him a grasping ambitious man; and, like many others in Spain, merely wishing for power for the lust thereof; but we were soon undeceived by his conduct when the reins of government fell into his hand. That he was ambitious we have no doubt; but his ambition was of the noble and generous kind; he wished to become the regenerator of his country—to heal her sores, and at the same time to reclaim her vices—to make her really strong and powerful—and, above all, independent of France. But all his efforts were foiled by the wilfulness of the animal—she observed his gentleness, which she mistook for fear, a common mistake with jades—gave a kick, and good bye to Espartero! There is, however, one blot in Espartero's career; we allude to it with pain, for in every other point we believe him to have been a noble and generous character; but his treatment of Cordova cannot be commended on any principle of honour or rectitude. Cordova was his friend and benefactor, to whom he was mainly indebted for his advancement in the army. Espartero was a brave soldier, with some talent for military matters. But when did either bravery or talent serve as credentials for advancement in the Spanish service? He would have remained at the present day a major or a colonel but for the friendship of Cordova, who,

amongst other things, was a courtier, and who was raised to the command of the armies of Spain by a court intrigue—which command he resigned into the hands of Espartero when the revolution of the Granja and the downfall of his friends, the Moderados, compelled him to take refuge in France. The friendship of Cordova and Espartero had been so well known that for a long time it was considered that the latter was merely holding the command till his friend might deem it safe and prudent to return and resume it. Espartero, however, had conceived widely different views. After the return of Cordova to Spain he caused him to be exiled under some pretence or other. He doubtless feared him, and perhaps with reason; but the man had been his friend and benefactor, and to the relations which had once existed between them Cordova himself alludes in a manifesto which he printed at Badajoz when on his way to Portugal, and which contains passages of considerable pathos. Is there not something like retribution in the fact that Espartero is now himself in exile?

Cordova! His name is at present all but forgotten, yet it was at one time in the power of that man to have made himself master of the destinies of Spain. He was at the head of the army—was the favourite of Christina—and was, moreover, in the closest connexion with the Moderado party—the most unscrupulous, crafty, and formidable of all the factions which in these latter times have appeared in the bloody circus

of Spain. But if ever there was a man, a real man of flesh and blood, who in every tittle answered to one of the best of the many well-drawn characters in Le Sage's wonderful novel—one of the masters of Gil Blas, a certain Don Mathias, who got up at midday, and rasped tobacco whilst lolling on the sofa, till the time arrived for dressing and strolling forth to the prado—a thorough Spanish coxcomb highly perfumed, who wrote love-letters to himself bearing the names of noble ladies—brave withal and ever ready to vindicate his honour at the sword's point, provided he was not called out too early of a morning—it was this self-same Don Cordova, who we repeat had the destinies of Spain at one time in his power, and who, had he managed his cards well, and death had not intervened, might at the present moment have occupied the self-same position which Narvaez fills with so much credit to himself. The man had lots of courage, was well versed in the art military; and once, to his honour be it said, whilst commanding a division of the Christino army, defeated Zumalacarregui in his own defiles; but, like Don Mathias, he was fond of champagne suppers with actresses, and would always postpone a battle for a ball or a horse-race. About five years ago we were lying off Lisbon in a steamer in our way from Spain. The morning was fine, and we were upon deck staring vacantly about us, as is our custom, with our hands in our pockets, when a large barge with an awning, and manned by many

rowers, came dashing through the water and touched the vessel's side. Some people came on board, of whom, however, we took but little notice, continuing with our hands in our pockets staring sometimes at the river, and sometimes at the castle of Saint George, the most remarkable object connected with the 'white city,' which strikes the eye from the Tagus. In a minute or two the steward came running up to us from the cabin, and said, 'There are two or three strange people below who seem to want something; but what it is we can't make out, for we don't understand them. Now I heard you talking 'Moors' the other day to the black cook, so pray have the kindness to come and say two or three words in Moors to the people below.' Whereupon, without any hesitation, we followed the steward into the cabin. 'Here's one who can jabber Moors with you,' bawled he, bustling up to the new comers. On observing the strangers, however, who sat on one of the sofas, instead of addressing them in 'Moors,' we took our hands out of our pockets, drew ourselves up, and making a most ceremonious bow, exclaimed in pure and sonorous Castilian, 'Cavaliers, at your feet! What may it please you to command?'

The strangers, who had looked somewhat blank at the first appearance of our figure, no sooner heard us address them in this manner than they uttered a simultaneous 'Ola!' and, springing up, advanced towards us with countenances irradiated with smiles.

They were three in number, to say nothing of a tall loutish fellow with something of the look of a domestic, who stood at some distance. All three were evidently gentlemen—one was a lad about twenty, the other might be some ten years older—but the one who stood between the two, and who immediately confronted us, was evidently the principal. He might be about forty, and was tall and rather thin; his hair was of the darkest brown; his face strongly marked and exceedingly expressive; his nose was fine, so was his forehead, and his eyes sparkled like diamonds beneath a pair of bushy brows slightly grizzled. He had one disagreeable feature—his mouth—which was wide and sensual-looking to a high degree. He was dressed with elegance—his brown surtout was faultless; shirt of the finest Holland, frill to correspond, and fine ruby pin. In a very delicate and white hand he held a delicate white handkerchief perfumed with the best atar-de-nuar of Abderrahman. 'What can we oblige you in, cavalier?' said we, as we looked him in the face: and then he took our hand, our brown hand, into his delicate white one, and whispered something into our ear—whereupon, turning round to the steward, we whispered something into his ear. 'I know nothing about it,' said the steward in a surly tone—we have nothing of the kind on board—no such article or packet is come; and I tell you what, I don't half like these fellows; I believe them to be custom-house spies: it was the custom-house barge

they came in, so tell them in Moors to get about their business.' 'The man is a barbarian, sir,' said we to the cavalier; 'but what you expected is certainly not come.' A deep shade of melancholy came over the countenance of the cavalier: he looked us wistfully in the face, and sighed; then, turning to his companions, he said, 'We are disappointed, but there is no remedy—Vamos, amigos.' Then, making us a low bow, he left the cabin, followed by his friends. The boat was ready, and the cavalier was about to descend the side of the vessel—we had also come on deck—suddenly our eyes met. 'Pardon a stranger, cavalier, if he takes the liberty of asking your illustrious name.' 'General Cordova,' said the cavalier in an under voice. We made our lowest bow, pressed our hand to our heart—he did the same, and in another minute was on his way to the shore. 'Do you know who that was?' said we to the steward—'that was the great General Cordova.' 'Cordova, Cordova,' said the steward. 'Well, I really believe I have something for that name. A general do you say? What a fool I have been—I suppose you couldn't call him back?' The next moment we were at the ship's side shouting. The boat had by this time nearly reached the Caesodrea, though, had it reached Cintra—but stay, Cintra is six leagues from Lisbon—and, moreover, no boat unless carried can reach Cintra. Twice did we lift up our voice. At the second shout the boat rested on its oars; and when we added 'Caballeros,

vengan ustedes atras,' its head was turned round in a jiffy, and back it came bounding over the waters with twice its former rapidity. We are again in the cabin; the three Spaniards, the domestic, ourselves, and the steward; the latter stands with his back against the door, for the purpose of keeping out intruders. There is a small chest on the table, on which all eyes are fixed; and now, at a sign from Cordova, the domestic advances, in his hand a chisel, which he inserts beneath the lid of the chest, exerting all the strength of his wrist—the lid flies open, and discloses some hundreds of genuine Havannah cigars. 'What obligations am I not under to you!' said Cordova, again taking us by the hand, 'the very sight of them gives me new life; long have I been expecting them. A trusty friend at Gibraltar promised to send them, but they have tarried many weeks: but now to dispose of this treasure.' In a moment he and his friends were busily employed in filling their pockets. Yes, Cordova, the renowned general, and the two secretaries of a certain legation at Lisbon—for such were his two friends—are stowing away the Havannah cigars with all the eagerness of contrabandistas. 'Rascal,' said Cordova, suddenly turning to his domestic with a furious air and regular Spanish grimace, 'you are doing nothing; why don't you take more?' 'I can't hold any more, your worship,' replied the latter in a piteous tone. 'My pockets are already full; and see how full I am here,' he con-

tinued, pointing to his bosom. 'Peace, bribon,' said his master; 'if your bosom is full, fill your hat, and put it on your head. We owe you more than we can express,' said he, turning round and addressing us in the blandest tones. 'But why all this mystery?' we demanded. 'O, tobacco is a royal monopoly here, you know, so we are obliged to be cautious.' 'But you came in the custom-house barge?' 'Yes, the superintendent of the customs lent it to us in order that we might be put to as little inconvenience as possible. Between ourselves, he knows all about it; he is only solicitous to avoid any scandal. Really these Portuguese have some slight tincture of gentility in them, though they are neither Castilian nor English,' he continued, making us another low bow. On taking his departure the general gave the steward an ounce of gold, and having embraced us and kissed us on the cheek, said, 'In a few weeks I shall be in England, pray come and see me there.' This we promised faithfully to do, but never had the opportunity; he went on shore with his cigars, gave a champagne supper to his friends, and the next morning was a corpse. What a puff of smoke is the breath of man!

But here before us is a Hand-book for Spain. From what we have written above it will have been seen that we are not altogether unacquainted with the country; indeed we plead guilty to having performed the grand tour of Spain more than once; but why do we say guilty—it is scarcely a thing to be ashamed of;

the country is a magnificent one, and the people are a highly curious people, and we are by no means sorry that we have made the acquaintance of either. Detestation of the public policy of Spain, and a hearty abhorrence of its state creed, we consider by no means incompatible with a warm admiration for the natural beauties of the country, and even a zest for Spanish life and manners. We love a ride in Spain, and the company to be found in a Spanish venta; but the Lord preserve us from the politics of Spain, and from having anything to do with the Spaniards in any graver matters than interchanging cigars and compliments, meetings upon the road (peaceable ones of course), kissing and embracing (see above). Whosoever wishes to enjoy Spain or the Spaniards, let him go as a private individual, the humbler in appearance the better: let him call every beggar Cavalier, every Don a Señor Conde; praise the water of the place in which he happens to be as the best of all water; and wherever he goes he will meet with attention and sympathy. 'The strange Cavalier is evidently the child of honourable fathers, although, poor man, he appears to be, like myself, unfortunate' —will be the ejaculation of many a proud *tatterdemalion* who has been refused charity with formal politeness—whereas should the stranger chuck him contemptuously an ounce of gold, he may be pretty sure that he has bought his undying hatred both in this world and the next.

Here we have a Hand-book for Spain—we mean for travellers in Spain—and of course for English travellers. The various hand-books which our friend Mr. Murray has published at different times are very well known, and their merit generally recognized. We cannot say that we have made use of any of them ourselves, yet in the course of our peregrinations we have frequently heard travellers speak in terms of high encomium of their general truth and exactness, and of the immense mass of information which they contain. There is one class of people, however, who are by no means disposed to look upon these publications with a favourable eye—we mean certain gentry generally known by the name of *valets de place*, for whom we confess we entertain no particular affection, believing them upon the whole to be about the most worthless, heartless, and greedy set of miscreants to be found upon the whole wide continent of Europe. These gentry, we have reason to know, look with a by no means favourable eye upon these far-famed publications of Albemarle-street. 'They steal away our honest bread,' said one of them to us the other day at Venice, '*I Signori forestieri* find no farther necessity for us since they have appeared; we are thinking of petitioning the government in order that they may be prohibited as heretical and republican. Were it not for these accursed books I should now have the advantage of waiting upon those *forestieri*' —and he pointed to a fat English squire, who with a

blooming daughter under each arm, was proceeding across the piazza to St. Marco with no other guide than a 'Murray,' which he held in his hand. High, however, as was the opinion which we had formed of these Hand-books from what we had heard concerning them, we were utterly unprepared for such a treat as has been afforded us by the perusal of the one which now lies before us—the Hand-book for Spain.

It is evidently the production of a highly-gifted and accomplished man of infinite cleverness, considerable learning, and who is moreover thoroughly acquainted with the subject of which he treats. That he knows Spain as completely as he knows the lines upon the palm of his hand, is a fact which cannot fail of forcing itself upon the conviction of any person who shall merely glance over the pages; yet this is a book not to be glanced over, for we defy any one to take it up without being seized with an irresistible inclination to peruse it from the beginning to the end—so flowing and captivating is the style, and so singular and various are the objects and events here treated of. We have here a perfect panorama of Spain, to accomplish which we believe to have been the aim and intention of the author; and gigantic as the conception was, it is but doing him justice to say that in our opinion he has fully worked it out. But what iron application was required for the task—what years of enormous labour must have been spent in carrying it into effect even after the necessary materials had been collected—and then the

collecting of the materials themselves—what strange ideas of difficulty and danger arise in our minds at the sole mention of that most important point! But here is the work before us; the splendid result of the toil, travel, genius, and learning of one man, and that man an Englishman. The above is no overstrained panegyric; we refer our readers to the work itself, and then fearlessly abandon the matter to their decision. We have here all Spain before us; mountain, plain, and river, *poblado y despoblado*—the well known and the mysterious—Barcelona and Batuecas.

Amidst all the delight and wonder which we have felt, we confess that we have been troubled by an impertinent thought of which we could not divest ourselves. We could not help thinking that the author, generous enough as he has been to the public, has been rather unjust to himself—by publishing the result of his labours under the present title. A Hand-book is a Hand-book after all, a very useful thing, but still—The fact is that we live in an age of humbug, in which every thing to obtain much note and reputation must depend less upon its own intrinsic merits than on the name it bears. The present work is about one of the best books ever written upon Spain; but we are afraid that it will never be estimated at its proper value; for after all a Hand-book is a Hand-book. Permit us, your Ladyship, to introduce to you the learned, talented, and imaginative author of the —shocking! Her Ladyship would faint, and would

never again admit ourselves and our friends to her *soirées*. What a pity that this delightful book does not bear a more romantic sounding title—'Wanderings in Spain,' for example; or yet better, 'The Wonders of the Peninsula.'

But are we not ourselves doing our author injustice? Aye surely; the man who could write a book of the character of the one which we have at present under notice, is above all such paltry considerations, so we may keep our pity for ourselves. If it please him to cast his book upon the waters in the present shape, what have we to do but to be grateful?—we forgot for a moment with what description of man we have to do. This is no vain empty coxcomb; he cannot but be aware that he has accomplished a great task; but such paltry considerations as those to which we have alluded above are not for him but for writers of a widely different stamp with whom we have nothing to do.

What to observe in Spain.

Before we proceed to point out the objects best worth seeing in the Peninsula, many of which are to be seen there only, it may be as well to mention what is *not* to be seen: there is no such loss of time as finding this out oneself, after weary chace and wasted hour. Those who expect to find well-garnished arsenals, libraries, restaurants, charitable or literary institutions, canals, railroads, tunnels, suspension-

bridges, steam-engines, omnibuses, manufactories, polytechnic galleries, pale-ale breweries, and similar appliances and appurtenances of a high state of political, social, and commercial civilisation, had better stay at home. In Spain there are no turnpike-trust meetings, no quarter-sessions, no courts of *justice*, according to the real meaning of that word, no tread-mills, no boards of guardians, no chairmen, directors, masters-extraordinary of the court of chancery, no assistant poor-law commissioners. There are no anti-tobacco-teetotal-temperance meetings, no auxiliary missionary propagating societies, nothing in the blanket and lying-in asylum line, nothing, in short, worth a revising barrister of three years' standing's notice. Spain is no country for the political economist, beyond affording an example of the decline of the wealth of nations, and offering a wide topic on errors to be avoided, as well as for experimental theories, plans of reform and amelioration. In Spain, Nature reigns ; she has there lavished her utmost prodigality of soil and climate which a bad government has for the last three centuries been endeavouring to counteract. *El cielo y suelo es bueno, el entresuelo malo*, and man, the occupier of the Peninsula *entresol*, uses, or rather abuses, with incurious apathy the goods with which the gods have provided him. Spain is a *terra incognita* to naturalists, geologists, and every branch of ists and ologists. The material is as superabundant as native labourers and operatives are deficient. All

these interesting branches of inquiry, healthful and agreeable, as being out-of-door pursuits; and bringing the amateur in close contact with nature, offer to embryo authors, who are ambitious to *book something new*, a more worthy subject than the *decies repetita* descriptions of bull-fights and the natural history of ollas and ventas. Those who aspire to the romantic, the poetical, the sentimental, the artistical, the antiquarian, the classical, in short, to any of the sublime and beautiful lines, will find both in the past and present state of Spain subjects enough, in wandering with lead-pencil and note-book through this singular country, which hovers between Europe and Africa, between civilisation and barbarism; this is the land of the green valley and barren mountain, of the boundless plain and the broken sierra, now of Elysian gardens of the vine, the olive, the orange, and the aloe, then of trackless, vast, silent, uncultivated wastes, the heritage of the wild bee. Here we fly from the dull uniformity, the polished monotony of Europe, to the racy freshness of an original, unchanged country, where antiquity treads on the heels of to-day, where Paganism disputes the very altar with Christianity, where indulgence and luxury contend with privation and poverty, where a want of all that is generous or merciful is blended with the most devoted heroic virtues, where the most cold-blooded cruelty is linked with the fiery passions of Africa, where ignorance and erudition stand in violent and striking contrast.

Here let the antiquarian pore over the stirring memorials of many thousand years, the vestiges of Phœnician enterprise, of Roman magnificence, of Moorish elegance, in that storehouse of ancient customs, that repository of all elsewhere long forgotten and passed by; here let him gaze upon those classical monuments, unequalled almost in Greece or Italy, and on those fairy Aladdin palaces, the creatures of Oriental gorgeousness and imagination, with which Spain alone can enchant the dull European; here let the man of feeling dwell on the poetry of her envy-disarming decay, fallen from her high estate, the dignity of a dethroned monarch, borne with unrepining self-respect, the last consolation of the innately noble, which no adversity can take away; here let the lover of art feed his eyes with the mighty masterpieces of Italian art, when Raphael and Titian strove to decorate the palaces of Charles, the great emperor of the age of Leo X., or with the living nature of Velazquez and Murillo, whose paintings are truly to be seen in Spain alone; here let the artist sketch the lowly mosque of the Moor, the lofty cathedral of the Christian, in which God is worshipped in a manner as nearly befitting His glory as the power and wealth of finite man can reach; art and nature here offer subjects, from the feudal castle, the vasty Escorial, the rock-built alcazar of imperial Toledo, the sunny towers of stately Seville, to the eternal snows and lovely vega of Granada: let the geologist clamber

over mountains of marble, and metal-pregnant sierras; let the botanist cull from the wild hothouse of nature plants unknown, unnumbered, matchless in colour, and breathing the aroma of the sweet south; let all, learned or unlearned, listen to the song, the guitar, the castanet; let all mingle with the gay, good-humoured, temperate peasantry, the finest in the world, free, manly, and independent, yet courteous and respectful; let all live with the noble, dignified, high-bred, self-respecting Spaniard; let all share in their easy, courteous society; let all admire their dark-eyed women, so frank and natural, to whom the voice of all ages and nations has conceded the palm of attraction, to whom Venus has bequeathed her magic girdle of grace and fascination; let all—*sed ohe! jam satis*—enough for starting on this expedition, where, as Don Quixote said, there are opportunities for what are called adventures elbow deep.

The following account of the rivers of Spain would do credit to the pen of Robertson:—

'There are six great rivers in Spain,—the arteries which run between the seven mountain chains, the vertebræ of the geological skeleton. These six water-sheds are each intersected in their extent by others on a minor scale, by valleys and indentations, in each of which runs its own stream. Thus the rains and melted snows are all collected in an infinity of ramifications, and carried by these tributary conduits into one of the six main trunks, or great rivers: all these,

with the exception of the Ebro, empty themselves into the Atlantic. The Duero and Tagus, unfortunately for Spain, disembogue in Portugal, thus becoming a portion of a foreign dominion exactly where their commercial importance is the greatest. Philip II. saw the true value of the possession of Portugal, which rounded and consolidated Spain, and insured to her the possession of these valuable outlets of internal produce, and inlets for external commerce. Portugal annexed to Spain gave more real power to his throne than the dominion of entire continents across the Atlantic. The *Miño*, which is the shortest of these rivers, runs through a bosom of fertility. The *Tajo*, Tagus, which the fancy of poets has sanded with gold and embanked with roses, tracks much of its dreary way through rocks and comparative barrenness. The *Guadiana* creeps through lonely Estremadura, infecting the low plains with miasma. The *Guadalquivir* eats out its deep banks amid the sunny olive-clad regions of Andalucia, as the Ebro divides the levels of Arragon. Spain abounds with brackish streams, *Salados*, and with salt-mines, or saline deposits, after the evaporation of the sea-waters. The central soil is strongly impregnated with saltpetre: always arid, it every day is becoming more so, from the singular antipathy which the inhabitants of the interior have against trees. There is nothing to check the power of evaporation, no shelter to protect or preserve moisture. The soil becomes more

and more baked and calcined; in some parts it has almost ceased to be available for cultivation: another serious evil, which arises from want of plantations, is, that the slopes of hills are everywhere liable to constant denudation of soil after heavy rain. There is nothing to break the descent of the water; hence the naked, barren stone summits of many of the sierras, which have been pared and peeled of every particle capable of nourishing vegetation; they are skeletons where life is extinct. Not only is the soil thus lost, but the detritus washed down either forms bars at the mouths of rivers, or chokes up and raises their beds; they are thus rendered liable to overflow their banks, and convert the adjoining plains into pestilential swamps. The supply of water, which is afforded by periodical rains, and which ought to support the reservoirs of rivers, is carried off at once in violent floods, rather than in a gentle gradual disembocation. The volume in the principal rivers of Spain has diminished, and is diminishing. Rivers which were navigable are so no longer; the artificial canals which were to have been substituted remain unfinished: the progress of deterioration advances, while little is done to counteract or amend what every year must render more difficult and expensive, while the means of repair and correction will diminish in equal proportion, from the poverty occasioned by the evil, and by the fearful extent which it will be allowed to attain. The rivers which are really adapted to

navigation are, however, only those which are perpetually fed by those tributary streams that flow down from mountains which are covered with snow all the year, and these are not many. The majority of Spanish rivers are very scanty of water during the summer time, and very rapid in their flow when filled by rains or melting snow: during these periods they are impracticable for boats. They are, moreover, much exhausted by being drained off, bled, for the purposes of artificial irrigation. The scarcity of rain in the central table-lands is much against a regular supply of water to the springs of the rivers: the water is soon sucked up by a parched, dusty, and thirsty soil, or evaporated by the dryness of the atmosphere. Many of the *sierras* are indeed covered with snow, but to no great depth, and the coating soon melts under the summer suns, and passes rapidly away.'

Here we have a sunny little sketch of a certain locality at Seville; it is too life-like not to have been taken on the spot:—

'The sunny flats under the old Moorish walls, which extend between the gates of *Carmona* and *La Carne*, are the haunts of idlers and of gamesters. The lower classes of Spaniards are constantly gambling at cards: groups are to be seen playing all day long for wine, love, or coppers, in the sun, or under their vine-trellises. There is generally some well-known cock of the walk, a bully, or *guapo*, who will come up and lay his hands on the cards, and say, 'No one shall play

here but with mine'—*aquí no se juega sino con mis barajas.* If the gamblers are cowed, they give him *dos cuartos*, a halfpenny each. If, however, one of the challenged be a spirited fellow, he defies him. *Aquí no se cobra el barato sino con un punal de Albacete*—'You get no change here except out of an Albacete knife.' If the defiance be accepted, *vamos allá* is the answer—'Let's go to it.' There's an end then of the cards, all flock to the more interesting *écarté;* instances have occurred, where Greek meets Greek, of their tying the two advanced feet together, and yet remaining fencing with knife and cloak for a quarter of an hour before the blow be dealt. The knife is held firmly, the thumb is pressed straight on the blade, and calculated either for the cut or thrust, to chip bread and kill men.'

Apropos of Seville. It is sometimes called we believe La Capital de Majeza ; the proper translation of which we conceive to be the Head Quarters of Foolery, for nothing more absurd and contemptible than this Majeza ever came within the sphere of our contemplation. Nevertheless it constitutes the chief glory of the Sevillians. Every Sevillian, male or female, rich or poor, handsome or ugly, aspires at a certain period of life to the character of the majo or maja. We are not going to waste either space or time by entering into any lengthened detail of this ridiculous nonsense : indeed, it is quite unnecessary ; almost every one of the books published on Spain,

and their name at present is legion, being crammed with details of this same Majeza—a happy combination of insolence, ignorance, frippery, and folly. The majo or Tomfool struts about the streets dressed something like a merry Andrew with jerkin and tight hose, a faja or girdle of crimson silk round his waist, in which is sometimes stuck a dagger, his neck exposed, and a queer kind of half-peaked hat on his head. He smokes continually, thinks there is no place like Seville, and that he is the prettiest fellow in Seville. His favourite word is 'Carajo!' The maja or she-simpleton, wears a fan and mantilla, exhibits a swimming and affected gait, thinks that there's no place like Seville, that she is the flower of Seville—Carai! is her favourite exclamation. But enough of these poor ridiculous creatures. Yet, ridiculous in every respect as they are, these majos and majas find imitators and admirers in people who might be expected to look down with contempt upon them and their follies; we have seen, and we tell it with shame, we have seen Englishmen dressed in Tomfool's livery lounging about Seville breathing out smoke and affecting the airs of hijos de Sevilla; and what was yet worse, fair blooming Englishwomen, forgetful of their rank as daughters of England, appearing à la maja on the banks of the Guadalquivir, with fan and mantilla, carai and caramba. We wish sincerely that our countrymen and women whilst travelling abroad would always bear in mind that they

can only be respected or respectable so long as they maintain their proper character—that of Englishmen and Englishwomen;—but in attempting to appear French, Italians, and Spaniards, they only make themselves supremely ridiculous. As the tree falls, so must it lie. They are children of England; they cannot alter that fact, therefore let them make the most of it, and after all it is no bad thing to be a child of England. But what a poor feeble mind must be his who would deny his country under any circumstances! Therefore, gentle English travellers, when you go to Seville, amongst other places, appear there as English, though not obtrusively, and do not disgrace your country by imitating the airs and graces of creatures whom the other Spaniards, namely, Castilians, Manchegans, Aragonese, &c., pronounce to be fools.

The Normans in Spain.

'In the ninth century, the Normans or Northmen made piratical excursions on the W. coast of Spain. They passed, in 843, from Lisbon up to the straits and everywhere, as in France, overcame the unprepared natives, plundering, burning, and destroying. They captured even Seville itself, September 30, 844, but were met by the Cordovese Kalif, beaten, and expelled. They were called by the Moors *Majus*, *Madjous*, *Magioges* (Conde, i. 282), and by the early Spanish annalists *Almajuzes*. The root has been

erroneously derived from Μάγος, Magus, magicians or supernatural beings, as they were almost held to be. The term *Madjous* was, strictly speaking, applied by the Moors to those Berbers and Africans who were Pagans or Muwallads, *i.e.* not believers in the Khoran. The true etymology is that of the Gog and Magog so frequently mentioned by Ezekiel (xxxviii. and xxxix.) and in the Revelations (xx. 8) as ravagers of the earth and nations, May-Gogg, "he that dissolveth,"—the fierce Normans appeared, coming no one knew from whence, just when the minds of men were trembling at the approach of the millennium, and thus were held to be the forerunners of the destroyers of the world. This name of indefinite gigantic power survived in the *Mogigangas*, or terrific images, which the Spaniards used to parade in their religious festivals, like the Gogs and Magogs of our civic wise men of the East. Thus Andalucia being the halfway point between the N. and S.E., became the meeting-place of the two great ravaging swarms which have desolated Europe: here the stalwart children of frozen Norway, the worshippers of Odin, clashed against the Saracens from torrid Arabia, the followers of Mahomet. Nor can a greater proof be adduced of the power and relative superiority of the Cordovese Moors over the other nations of Europe, than this, their successful resistance to those fierce invaders, who overran without difficulty the coasts of England, France, Apulia, and Sicily: conquerors everywhere

else, here they were driven back in disgrace. Hence the bitter hatred of the Normans against the Spanish Moors, hence their alliances with the Catalans, where a Norman impression yet remains in architecture; but, as in Sicily, these barbarians, unrecruited from the North, soon died away, or were assimilated as usual with the more polished people, whom they had subdued by mere superiority of brute force.'

If the Moors called the Norsemen Al Madjus, which according to our author signifies Gog and Magog, the Norsemen retorted by a far more definite and expressive nickname; this was Blue-skins or Bluemen, doubtless in allusion to the livid countenances of the Moors. The battles between the Moors and the Northmen are frequently mentioned in the Sagas, none of which, however, are of higher antiquity than the eleventh century. In none of these chronicles do we find any account of this raid upon Seville in 844; it was probably a very inconsiderable affair magnified by the Moors and their historians. Snorre speaks of the terrible attack of Sigurd, surnamed the Jorsal wanderer, or Jerusalem pilgrim, upon Lisbon and Cintra, both of which places he took, destroying the Moors by hundreds. He subsequently 'harried' the southern coasts of Spain on his voyage to Constantinople. But this occurred some two hundred years after the affair of Seville mentioned in the Handbook. It does not appear that the Norse ever made any serious attempt to

establish their power in Spain; had they done so we have no doubt that they would have succeeded. We entertain all due respect for the courage and chivalry of the Moors, especially those of Cordova, but we would have backed the Norse, especially the pagan Norse, against the best of them. The Biarkemal would soon have drowned the Moorish 'Lelhies.'

'Thou Har, who grip'st thy foeman
Right hard, and Rolf the bowman,
And many, many others,
The forky lightning's brothers,
Wake—not for banquet table,
Wake—not with maids to gabble,
But wake for rougher sporting,
For Hildur's bloody courting.'

Under the head of La Mancha our author has much to say on the subject of Don Quixote; and to the greater part of what he says we yield our respectful assent. His observations upon the two principal characters in that remarkable work display much sound as well as original criticism. We cannot however agree with him in preferring the second part, which we think a considerable falling off from the first. We should scarcely believe the two parts were written by the same hand. We have read through both various times, but we have always sighed on coming to the conclusion of the first. It was formerly our custom to read the Don 'pervasively' once every

three years; we still keep up that custom *in part*, and hope to do so whilst life remains. We say *in part*, because we now conclude with the first part going no farther. We have little sympathy with the pranks played off upon Sancho and his master by the Duke and Duchess, to the description of which so much space is devoted; and as for the affair of Sancho's government at Barataria, it appears to us full of inconsistency and absurdity. Barataria, we are told, was a place upon the Duke's estate, consisting of two or three thousand inhabitants; and of such a place it was very possible for a nobleman to have made the poor squire governor; but we no sooner get to Barataria than we find ourselves not in a townlet, but in a *capital* in Madrid. The governor at night makes his rounds, attended by 'an immense watch;' he wanders from one street to another for hours; he encounters all kinds of adventures, not mock but real adventures, and all kinds of characters, not mock but real characters; there is talk of bull-circuses, theatres, gambling-houses, and such like; and all this in a place of two or three thousand inhabitants, in which, by the way, nothing but a cat is ever heard stirring after eight o'clock; this we consider to be carrying the joke rather too far; and it is not Sancho but the reader who is joked with. But the first part is a widely different affair: all the scenes are admirable. Should we live a thousand years, we should never forget the impression made upon us by the adventure

of the corpse, where the Don falls upon the priests who are escorting the bier by torch light, and by the sequel thereto, his midnight adventures in the Brown Mountain. We can only speak of these scenes as astonishing—they have never been equalled in their line. There is another wonderful book which describes what we may call the city life of Spain, as the other describes the vida del campo—we allude of course to Le Sage's novel, which as a whole we prefer to Don Quixote, the characters introduced being certainly more true to nature than those which appear in the other great work. Shame to Spain that she has not long since erected a statue to Le Sage, who has done so much to illustrate her; but miserable envy and jealousy have been at the bottom of the feeling ever manifested in Spain towards that illustrious name. There are some few stains in the grand work of Le Sage. He has imitated without acknowledgment three or four passages contained in the life of Obregon, a curious work, of which we have already spoken, and to which on some future occasion we may perhaps revert.

But the Hand-book? We take leave of it with the highest respect and admiration for the author; and recommend it not only to travellers in Spain, but to the public in general, as a work of a very high order, written *con amore* by a man who has devoted his whole time, talents, and all the various treasures of an extensive learning to its execution. We repeat that

we were totally unprepared for such a literary treat as he has here placed before us. It is our sincere wish that at his full convenience he will favour us with something which may claim consanguinity with the present work. It hardly becomes us to point out to an author subjects on which to exercise his powers. We shall, however, take the liberty of hinting that a good history of Spain does not exist, at least in English—and that not even Shelton produced a satisfactory translation of the great gem of Spanish literature, 'The Life and Adventures of Don Quixote.'

LONDON:
Printed for THOMAS J. WISE, Hampstead, N.W.

Edition limited to Thirty Copies

CHILD MAIDELVOLD

AND OTHER BALLADS

BY

GEORGE BORROW

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CHILD MAIDELVOLD.

The fair Sidselil, of all maidens the flower,
With her mother the Queen sat at work in her bower.

So hard at the woof the fair Sidselil plies,
That out from her bosom, so white, the milk flies.

"Now hear thou, O Sidselil, child of my heart,
What causes the milk from thy bosom to start?"

"O that is not milk, my dear mother, I vow,
It is but the mead I was drinking just now."

"Unlike are the two, most unlike to the sight,
The one it is brown, and the other is white."

"I see it is best that the truth be declared,
The handsome Child Maidelvold me has ensnared."

"And if it be truth what thou now hast declared,
And handsome Child Maidelvold thee has ensnared,

"Aloft on the gallows I'll hang him, I trow,
And burn thee to ashes the gallows below."

Proud Sidselil she her blue mantle puts on,
And unto Child Maidelvold's bower she is gone.

With her fingers so tapering she twirled at the pin :
"Child Maidelvold rise, and with speed let me in."

"I've summoned no one the tribunal before,
And at night to no one will I open my door."

"Child Maidelvold rise, I beseech, in Christ's name,
I've spoke to my mother who knows of my shame.

"Aloft on the gallows she'll hang thee, I trow,
And burn me to ashes the gallows below."

"O I will not hang, my sweet maiden, for thee
And thou shalt not burn, my sweet maiden, for
me.

"Collect thou thy gold in the coffer with speed,
And I'll to the stable and saddle my steed."

He flung round the maiden his mantle so wide,
And he lifted her up on his courser of pride.

They came to the wood of the briar and rose,
There Sidselil craved for a while to repose.

"Now art thou fatigued by thy journey, sweet
love,
Or say, does the saddle too close for thee
prove?"

"I am not o'ercome by the journey, sweet love,
But the saddle too close for my burden doth
prove."

He spread on the cold earth his mantle so wide:
"Here rest thee a space and I'll watch by thy side."

"O Jesus, that one of my maidens were near,
The pains of a mother are on me I fear."

"Thy maidens are now at a distance from thee,
And thou hast no one to assist thee but me."

"'Twere better to perish again and again,
Than thou should'st stand by me and gaze on my pain."

"Then take off thy kerchief and cover my head,
And perhaps I may stand in the wise woman's stead."

"One draught of pure water could'st thou bring me now,
To cheer up my heart that is sinking so low?"

So faithful to her was the Child, and so true,
He fetched her the drink in her gold spangled shoe.

Child Maidelvold sped through the forest so
black,
He went to the fountain the wearisome track.

And when he arrived at the fount in the vale,
Two nightingales sat there and sang him their
tale:

"Dead Sidselil lieth beneath the green bough,
With two little babes on her bosom of snow."

He paid little heed to the nightingales' lay,
And traced through the forest his wearisome
way.

But, ah! what a spectacle burst on his view,
The little birds' story he found to be true.

A grave broad and deep has Child Maidelvold
made,
Therein the unfortunate three he has laid.

As o'er them he clamped the mould down with
his boot,
He thought that the babies screamed under his
foot.

Against a grey stone has the Child set his sword,
The point of the blade his heart mortally gor'd.

He was true to his Sidselil whilst he had breath,
He lies 'neath the earth now beside her in death.

*** Another, but widely different, version of this Ballad was printed in *Romantic Ballads*, 1826, pp. 28–31, under the title *Sir Middel*. In this version the name of the heroine is Swanelil, in place of Sidselil; and that of the hero is Sir Middel, in place of Child Maidelvold.

SIR PETER.

Sir Peter and Kirstin they sat by the board,
Betwixt them in jest there passed many a word.

"Now listen to me, good Sir Peter the knight,
Say, when wilt thou me to thy bridal invite?"

"'Twill be held in a far distant country, I trow,
So far that to come quite unable art thou."

"And though thou shouldst hold it, Sir Peter, in
Rome,
If thou shouldst invite me I'd certainly come."

"And if at my bridals thou wish to appear,
Behind thou must leave all thy red golden gear."

"In my red golden gear I will ever go dight,
For it was not gained by dishonor, Sir Knight."

Sir Peter he bids them his bridals get ready,
Cries Kirstin: "Now shoe ye my palfrey so steady."

Fair Kirstin she saddles her courser so gray,
To the house of Sir Peter she taketh her way.

She rides her horse into Sir Peter's court yard,
And there stood the knight, clad in sable and mard.

"Now hear thou, Sir Peter, so handsome and fine,
Say, may I this day skink before thee the wine?"

"To skink wine before me if thee I permit,
Thou on the stone bench with the servants shalt sit."

Adown her cheeks trickled the tear-drops so free—
How hard by each mortal insulted to be!

To the high and wide hall good Sir Peter proceeds,
Fair Kirstin behind him in rich scarlet weeds.

A coronet glittered her temples upon,
And full of gold rings were her fingers, each one.

When into the hall little Kirstin she came,
Uprose to receive her each maiden and dame.

She took in her fair hand the white silver can,
To skink mead before the young knight she began.

The youthful bride said to her servant: "Canst tell
The name of that skinker, that sweet demoiselle?"

Then answered the servant, as low as she might:
"'Tis only Sir Peter his love-lady light."

"And if he possessed such a leman, why rode
Sir Peter the knight to my father's abode?

"And had good Sir Peter a leman so brave,
O why did he me of my father e'er crave.

"More gold she displays on her ten fingers small,
Than my father could show in his good castle all."

Now o'er was the supper, the laugh and the song,
To retire to her bed the young bride she doth long.

With the bride to the bridal apartment they go,
Fair Kirstin in front bears the yellow flambeau.

The bride in the soft bridal couch they have plac'd,
To come to her arms good Sir Peter made haste.

INGEFRED AND GUDRUNE.

Ingefred and Gudrune they sate in their bower,
Each bloomed a beauteous fragrant flower—
So sweet it is in summer tide!

A working the gold fair Ingefred kept,
Still sate Gudrune, and bitterly wept.

"Dear sister Gudrune so fain I'd know
Why down thy cheek the salt tears flow?"

"Cause enough have I to be thus forlorn,
With a load of sorrow my heart is worn.

"Hear, Ingefred, hear what I say to thee,
Wilt thou to-night stand bride for me?

"If bride for me thou wilt stand to-night,
I'll give thee my bridal clothes thee to requite.

"And more, much more to thee I'll give,
All my bride jewels thou shalt receive."

"O I will not stand for bride in thy room,
Save I also obtain thy merry bridegroom."

"Betide me whatever the Lord ordain
From me my bridegroom thou never shalt gain."

In silks so costly the bride they arrayed,
And unto the kirk the bride they conveyed.

In golden cloth weed the holy priest stands,
He joins of Gudrune and Samsing the hands.

O'er the downs and green grass meadows they
sped,
Where the herdsman watched his herd asit fed.

"Of thy beauteous self, dear Damsel, take heed,
Ne'er enter the house of Sir Samsing, I rede.

Sir Samsing possesses two nightingales
Who tell of the Ladies such wondrous tales.

With their voices of harmony they can declare
Whether maiden or none has fallen to his share."

The chariot they stopped in the green wood shade,
An exchange 'twixt them of their clothes they made.

They change of their dress whatever they please,
Their faces they cannot exchange with like ease.

To Sir Samsing's house the bride they conveyed,
Of the ruddy gold no spare was made.

On the bridal throne the bride they plac'd,
They skinked the mead for the bride to taste.

Then said from his place the court buffoon,
"Methinks thou art Ingefred not Gudrune."

From off her hand a gold ring she took,
Which she gave the buffoon with entreating look.

Said he: "I'm an oaf and have drunk too hard,
To words of mine pay no regard."

'Twas deep at night, and down fell the mist,
To her bed the young bride they assist.

Sir Samsing spoke to his nightingales twain :
" Before my young bride sing now a strain.

" A song now sing which shall avouch
Whether I've a maiden or none in my couch."

" A maid's in the bed, that's certain and sure,
Gudrune is standing yet on the floor."

" Proud Ingefred straight from my couch retire !
Gudrune come hither, or dread my ire !

" Now tell me, Gudrune, with open heart,
What made thee from thy bed depart ? "

" My father, alas ! dwelt near the strand,
When war and bloodshed filled the land.

" Full eight there were broke into my bower,
One only ravished my virgin flower."

Upon her fair cheek he gave a kiss :
" My dearest, my dearest, all sorrow dismiss ;

" My swains they were that broke into thy bower,
'Twas I that gathered thy virgin flower."

Fair Ingefred gained, because bride she had
been,
One of the King's knights of handsome mien.

SIR RIBOLT.

Ribolt the son of a Count was he—
Gulborg he courted in secrecy.

Since she was a child the maid he woo'd,
And till she had come to womanhood.

"Gulborg do thou become my bride,
In a better land then thou shalt reside.

"Unto the land I thee will bear,
Where grief ne'er comes the mind to tear.

"To an island 'neath a blissful sky,
Where thou shalt live and never die."

"To the land thou never me wilt bear,
But grief shall come the mind to tear.

"Nor me to the isle wilt thou convey
Where I've no death to the Lord to pay."

"O there no grass but the leek up-springs,
And there no bird but the cuckoo sings.

"No other water flows than wine,
Thou may'st believe these words of mine."

"But how from the Castle can I fly?
So many watch incessantly.

"I'm watched by father, watched by mother,
By sister I am watched, and brother.

"I'm watched by the man to whom I'm plighted,
And I fear him more than the rest united."

"Although by all thy clan controll'd,
Thy promise to me thou yet shall hold.

"In my acton blue I thee will case,
And my golden helm on thy head I'll place.

"I'll gird thee with my sword of worth,
Then none will think that a maid rides forth.

"Decked with my gilded spurs so free,
Thou off may'st ride though thy father see."

O'er her he threw his mantle wide,
And set her upon his steed of pride.

When on the moor themselves they found,
Met them a Count, in arms renown'd.

"Here, Ribolt, hear, dear comrade mine,
Say, who's that fair young page of thine?"

"Comrade, it is my youngest brother,
I've ta'en him from his doting mother."

"It little avails such tales to tell;
Gulborg, Gulborg, I know thee well.

"Thy scarlet dress thou may'st disguise,
But thy cheeks of rose I recognise.

"Thy hair I know of fairest sort,
For long I've served at thy father's court.

"By thy garb and shoon I know thee not,
But I know the knight who thy troth has got."

A bracelet drew she forth of gold,
And gave it to that Count so bold :

" Where'er thou rest thee at close of day,
Be sure no word of me thou say."

The Count he rode to Kulloe house,
Where the kemps were drinking a deep carouse.

He enter'd at Sir Truid's gate—
At his table wide Sir Truid sate.

" Here, Truid, thou sitt'st the red wine taking,
Whilst Ribolt off with thy bride is making."

Then through his hall Sir Truid roar'd:
" Up, up, ye knights, take helm and sword ! "

Barely a mile had they advanced
When fair Gulborg behind her glanced.

" O yonder my father's steed I see,
And the knight who is betrothed to me."

" Gulborg, be therefore in no pain,
But hold our steeds by the bridle rein.

"And though to earth thou see me fall,
Gulborg thou must not upon me call.

"And though thou see me freely bleed,
Let not my name from thy mouth proceed."

His helm on his head Sir Ribolt cast,
Gulborg with her fair hands laced it fast.

Then, crying his cry, he slays outright
Her father dear and her plighted knight,

And, at the second "Halloo," he slew
Her brothers with locks of yellow hue.

"Desist, O Ribolt, my heart's ador'd,
'Tis time, 'tis time to sheath thy sword.

"My youngest brother I pray thee spare,
That he to my mother may tiding bear;

"Bear her the tidings of the slaughter,
O would she never had borne a daughter!"

Scarce had the name of Ribolt sounded,
When Ribolt tottered, deadly wounded.

He sheathed his faulchion, blood be-dyed:
"Come, dear Gulborg, we hence will ride."

They thread the mazes of the wood,
No word escaped him, bad or good.

"Hear, Ribolt, hear, my destined mate,
Why art not glad as thou wast of late?"

"Gulborg, I feel my life-blood leak,
Gulborg, I feel me faint and weak.

"But chiefly, chiefly I look not pleas'd
Because Death's hand my heart has seiz'd."

"Myself of my girdle I'll dis-array,
And thy streaming blood will stanch and stay."

"God bless thee ever, my own true love,
Of service slight will thy girdle prove."

And when to the Castle gate they won,
His mother stood there and leaned thereon.

"Welcome, my son, thou art welcome twice,
And thy fair young bride she is welcome thrice.

"I ne'er have seen a bride so pale
Come travelling over hill and dale."

"If pale she be is a wonder slight,
When she has witness'd so hard a fight.

"God grant I may retain my breath
Whilst parting presents I bequeath.

"To my father I give my courser tall,
O mother I pray thee a priest to call.

"And unto my brother, who's standing near,
I give Gulborg whom I love so dear."

"O willingly her to wife I'd take,
If, brother, 'twere not for the black sin's sake."

"May the Lord God me in my trouble aid,
So sure as she is for me a maid.

"'Twas only once that I had the bliss
From her rosy mouth to snatch a kiss."

"O better, better to sink in death,
Than unto two brothers plight my faith."

Ribolt was dead ere the cock did cry,
Gulborg was dead ere the sun was high.

They bore from the Castle corses three,
A handsome corse was each to see.

The one was Ribolt, the other his bride,
His mother the third, of grief she died.

LONDON:
Printed for THOMAS J. WISE, Hampstead, N.W.
Edition limited to Thirty Copies.

KING DIDERIK

AND THE FIGHT BETWEEN THE LION AND DRAGON

AND OTHER BALLADS

BY

GEORGE BORROW

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KING DIDERIK AND THE LION'S FIGHT WITH THE DRAGON

FROM Bern rode forth King Diderik,
A stately warrior form;
Engaged in fray he found in the way
A lion and laidly worm.*

They fought for a day, they fought for two,
But ere the third was flown,
The worm outfought the beast, and brought
To earth the lion down.

Then cried the lion in his need
When he the warrior saw:
"O aid me quick, King Diderik,
To 'scape the Dragon's claw.

* Dragon.

"O aid me quick, King Diderik,
For the mighty God thou fearest;
A lion save for the lion brave,
Which on thy shield thou bearest.

"Come to my rescue, thou noble King,
Help, help me for thy name;
Upon thy targe I stand at large,
Glittering like a flame."

Long, long stood he, King Diderik,
Deep musing thereupon;
At length he cried: "Whate'er betide
I'll help thee, noble one."

It was Sir King Diderik,
His good sword bare he made:
With courage fraught, the worm he fought,
'Till blood tinged all the blade.

The gallant lord would not delay
So fast his blows he dealt;
He hacked and gored until his sword
Was sundered at the hilt.

The Lindworm took him upon her back,
The horse beneath her tongue ;
To her mountain den she hurried then
To her eleven young.

The horse she cast before her young,
The man in a nook she throws :
" Assuage your greed upon the steed,
But I will to repose.

" I pray ye feed upon the steed,
At present no more I can ;
When I upleap, refreshed, from sleep,
We'll feast upon the man."

It was Sir King Diderik,
In the hill he searched around ;
Then, helped by the Lord, the famous sword
Called Adelring he found.

Aye there he found so sharp a sword,
And a knife with a golden heft :
" King Sigfred be God's grace with thee,
For here thy life was reft !

" I've been with thee in many a fight,
In many an inroad too,
But that thy doom had been in this tomb
I never, never knew."

It was Sir King Diderik,
Would prove the faulchion's might;
He hewed upon the flinty stone
'Till all around was light.

It was the youngest Lindworm saw
The sparks the hill illume:
" Who dares awake the fiery snake
In her own sleeping room?"

The Lindworm gnashed its teeth with rage,
Its grinning fangs it show'd:
" Who dares awake the mother snake
Within her own abode?"

Then spake the other little ones,
From the dark nooks of the hill:
" If from her sleep the old one leap,
'Twill fare with thee but ill."

Then answered Sir King Diderik,
His eyes with fury gleam:
"I will awake your mother snake
With chilly, chilly dream.

"Your mother she King Sigfred slew,
A man of noble line;
I'll on ye all avenge his fall
With this good hand of mine."

And then awaked the Lindworm old,
And on her fell such fear:
"Who thus with riot disturbs my quiet?
What noise is this I hear?"

Then said King Diderik: "'Tis I,
And this have I to say:
O'er hill and dale, 'neath thy crooked tail,
Thou brought'st me yesterday."

"O hew me not, King Diderik,
I'll give thee all my hoard;
'Twere best that we good friends should be,
So cast away thy sword."

"I pay no trust to thy false device,
Befool me thou wouldst fain;
Full many hast thou destroyed ere now,
Thou never shalt again."

"Hear me, Sir King Diderik,
Forbear to do me ill,
And thee I'll guide to thy plighted bride,
She's hidden in the hill.

"Above by my head, King Diderik,
Is hung the little key;
Below by my feet to the maiden sweet
Descend thou fearlessly."

"Above by thy head, thou serpent curst,
To begin I now intend;
Below by thy feet, as is full meet,
I soon shall make an end."

Then first the laidly worm he slew,
And then her young he smote;
But in vain did he try from the mountain to fly,
For tongues of snakes thrust out.

So then with toil in the rocky soil
He dug a trench profound,
That in the flood of serpent blood
And bane he might not be drowned.

Then bann'd the good King Diderik,
On the lion he wroth became :
"Bann'd, bann'd," said he, "may the lion be,
Confusion be his and shame."

"With subtle thought the brute has brought
On me this grievous risk ;
Which I ne'er had seen had he not been
Graved on my buckler's disc."

And when the gallant lion heard
The King bewail his hap :
"Stand fast, good lord," the lion roared,
"While with my claws I scrap."

The lion scrapp'd, King Diderik hewed,
Bright sparks the gloom relieved ;
Unless the beast had the knight released
He'd soon to death have grieved.

So when he had slain the laidly worm,
And her offspring all had kill'd;
Escaped the knight to the morning light,
With heavy cuirass and shield.

And when he had now come out of the hill
For his gallant courser he sighed;
With reason good he trust him could,
For they had each other tried.

"O there's no need to bewail the steed,
Which thou, Sir King, hast miss'd;
I am thy friend, my back ascend,
And ride where'er thou list."

So he rode o'er the deepest dales,
And o'er the verdant meads;
The knight he rode, the lion strode,
Through the dim forest glades.

The lion and King Diderik
Together thenceforth remain;
Each death had braved, and the other saved
From peril sore and pain

Where'er King Diderik rode in the fields
The lion beside him sped ;
When on the ground the knight sat down
In his bosom he laid his head.

Wherefore they call him the lion knight
With fame that name he bore ;
Their love so great did ne'er abate
Until their dying hour.

DIDERIK AND OLGER THE DANE

With his eighteen brothers Diderik stark
Dwells in the hills of Bern;
And each I wot twelve sons has got,
For manly feats they yearn.

He has twelve sisters, each of them
A dozen sons can show;
Thirteen the youngest, gallant lads,
Of fear who nothing know.

To stand before the King a crowd
Of giant bodies move;
I say to ye forsooth their heads
O'ertopped the beechen grove.

"With knights of pride we war have plied
For many, many a year;
Of Olger, who in Denmark reigns,
Such mighty things we hear.

"Men talk so fain of Olger Dane
Who dwells in Jutland's fields;
Crowned is his head with gold so red,
No tribute us he yields."

Then Swerting took a mace, and shook
That mace right furiously:
"From ten times ten of Olger's men
I would not look to flee!"

"Hark, Swerting, hark, of visage dark,
Esteem them not so little;
I'd have thee ken that Olger's men
Are knights of gallant mettle.

"They feel no fright for faulchions,
For arrows no dismay;
The desperate fight is their delight,
They deem it children's play."

Then cried the mighty man of Bern,
When pondered long had he :
" To Denmark we will wend, and learn
At home if Olger be."

They took their route from Berner land,
They eighteen thousand were ;
King Olger good they visit would,
And to Denmark all repair.

A messenger by Diderik sent
To Danish Olger goes :
" Say, will ye tribute pay to us,
Or with us bandy blows ? "

Then full of wrath King Olger grew,
Such speech he could not bear :
" Let Diderik meet us on the wold,
We'll battle with him there.

" Tribute to pay each Dane would scorn,
He's wont himself to take it ;
Our tribute ye will like but ill,
If ye come here to seek it."

His kemps then gathering in a ring
The news to them he told:
"Bern's haughty lord has sent us word
That he'll have tribute-gold.

"He'll either tribute have, or hold
With us a bloody feud;
But the first King he will not be
We have this year subdued."

Then cried in scorn a kempion good,
King Diderik's envoy to:
"To waste our home if Berners come
They all hence out won't go."

Soon as the news he heard, full glad
Was Ulf Van Yern, and gay;
Then laughed outright bold Hogen knight:
"Too long do they delay"

It was Vidrik Verlandson,
High beat with joy his heart;
Then said amain Orm Ungerswayne:
"To meet them let us start."

"The first man I'll be in the van,"
Sir Ivor Blue he cried:
"Nor shall ye say that I was last,"
Sir Kulden Gray replied.

King Olger on the verdant wold
With Diderik battle join'd;
To fight they went, no jest they meant,
So wroth were they in mind.

Endured for three long days the fray,
And flinch would neither side;
To help his lord each Dane his sword
In desperation plied.

Down ran the blood, like raging flood
Which 'neath steep hills doth pour;
Then tribute they were forced to pay
Who tribute asked before.

Rose in the sky the blood-reek high,
And dimmed the lustrous sun;
'Twas sad to spy the brave men lie
So thick the earth upon.

In gore lay thick both men and steeds,
  Dear friends were parted there;
All did not laugh the feast who sought,
  Too hot they found the fare.

Now tamer grown, the Berner Jutt
  Thought thus himself within:
"Of us a hundred scarce remain,
  We cannot hope to win."

Then took he to his heels and ran,
  Not often back looked he;
To say good night forgot Swerting quite,
  For Bern, for Bern they flee.

Then Diderik turned him with a shout
  That shook the vaulted skies:
"Bern, Bern's the place for us, I guess,
  For here no refuge lies!"

Then answered 'neath the green hill's side
  The son of Verland keen:
"Ye and your host will little boast
  Ye have in Denmark been."

Full eighteen thousand knights were they
When out they marched from Bern ;
Wounded and worn but seventy-five
With drooping crests, return.

OLGER THE DANE AND BURMAN

BURMAN in the mountain holds,
Makes his shield shine brightly there ;
A message he sends to Iceland's King,
For he has a daughter fair.

"Hear, good King of Iceland, hear,
Hear what now I say to thee :
Give to me thy daughter fair,
And divide thy land with me.

"Either yield thy daughter fair,
And divide with me thy land,
Or the warrior good prepare
Who in fight can me withstand."

" I have daughter none but one,
Damsel Gloriant her they call ;
To King Carvel she's betrothed,
And in him my trust is all.

" I have given her to a King
And King Carvel hight is he ;
If he fail to defend the maid,
Then thy booty she shall be."

'Twas the King of Iceland good,
To his daughter's bower he goes ;
And the Damsel Gloriant
To receive him gently rose.

" Hear, all dearest daughter mine,
For I bring thee tidings new ;
Burman in the mountain holds,
He would win thee and doth woo.

" Burman is a kempion dour,
And of jesting nought he knows ;
He will surely have thee soon,
If no warrior him oppose."

It was Damsel Gloriant,
Silent would no longer stand:
"In our tower a prisoner is
Who will Burman take in hand."

It was Damsel Gloriant,
Her blue mantle o'er her threw;
Swiftly to the prison tower,
Where the prisoners lay she flew.

It was Damsel Gloriant,
'Bove the prisoners all she cried:
"Hear thou, Olger good, the Dane,
Have thy legs yet power to stride?

"Art thou living, Olger Dane?
I have something to impart;
There is a trold for me that lusts,
And that trold is Burman swart.

"I'll not wed the filthy guest,
I'm betrothed to Christian knight;
I to thee will subject be
If thou conquer him in fight."

" Here I've lain for fifteen years,
All in chains and bondage hard ;
Blessings on thee, Gloriant,
That to me thou hast repaired.

" Here for fifteen years I've lain,
Borne fierce hunger-pangs, and thirst;
I'm not able now to wage
Fight as I was able erst."

" Hear thou me, good Olger Dane,
Save me from my peril, save ;
Ere I take the ugly trold
I would fling me in my grave.

" Burman is fierce, his horse is wild
I to thee will tell forsooth,
I have heard and been assured
That he bites with wolfish tooth.

" Nothing, nothing will he eat
But the flesh of Christian men ;
And nothing, nothing, will he drink
But human blood mixt up with bane."

"Thy father means a gallant man,
King Carvel to share thy bed;
Can he not hold thee from the trold,
That thou unto me hast sped?

"Blessings on thee, Gloriant,
That thou didst upon me think,
With Burman I will break a lance
If thou give me good meat and drink.

"Canst thou procure my horse again,
My good sword and hauberk tried?
Then for thy sake it will be,
I a course with him will ride.

"Carvel is my stall-brother true,
To his ears 'twill doubtless come;
Rather would I lose my life
Than the fiend should bear thee home."

"The best food which thou shalt choose
I for thee will straight provide;
And I will give thee thy steed again,
Which thou lovest best to ride.

"I will give thee the strongest sword
E'er that armed a warrior's side;
Give thee too a faulchion hard,
Well thereon thou may'st confide."

Olger from the tower they took,
Garments for him have they wrought;
They sat him highest at the board,
And rich meats for him they brought.

Burman riding came to court,
Thought to bear the maid away;
Olger the Dane against him rode,
And soon found him rougher play.

For two days they stoutly fought,
As the third towards evening drew
Down upon a stone they sat,
They their strength would there renew.

Then the valiant Burman kemp,
To the Danish Olger said:
"Quarter I will grant, if thou
Wilt believe in Mahommed."

Little could brook that, Olger the Dane,
On his foe fierce looks he bent :
"When thou dwell in blackest hell
Say by Olger thou wast sent."

Up then leapt the kempions twain,
'Gainst each other rode anew ;
Then asunder went their helms,
And afar their faulchions flew.

They fought so long, they fought so hard,
That their strength was well-nigh flown ;
Slain at length was Burman Kemp,
Dead to earth fell Burman down.

Olger to the Damsel rode :
"Thou mayst take thy plighted knight,
For I have with my good sword
Slain the foul and poisonous sprite."

London :
Printed for THOMAS J. WISE, Hampstead, N.W.
Edition limited to Thirty Copies

THE NIGHTINGALE
THE VALKYRIE AND RAVEN

AND OTHER BALLADS

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THE NIGHTINGALE, OR THE TRANSFORMED DAMSEL

I KNOW where stands a Castellaye,
Its turrets are so fairly gilt ;
With silver are its gates inlaid,
Its walls of marble stone are built.

Within it stands a linden tree,
With lovely leaves its boughs are hung,
Therein doth dwell a nightingale,
And sweetly moves that bird its tongue.

A gallant knight came riding by,
He heard its dulcet ditty ring ;
And sorely, sorely, wondered he
At midnight hour that it should sing.

"And hear, thou little Nightingale,
If thou to me wilt sing a lay,
Thy feathers I'll with gold bedeck,
Thy neck with costly pearls array."

"With golden feathers others lure,
Such gifts for me have value slight;
I am a strange and lonely bird,
But little known to mortal wight."

"And thou, a strange wild bird thou be,
Whom other mortals little know;
Yet hunger pinches thee, and cold,
When falls the cruel winter snow."

"I laugh at hunger, laugh at snow,
Which falls so wide on hill and lea;
But I am vexed by secret care,
I know not either joy or glee.

"Betwixt the hills and valleys deep
Away the rapid rivers flow;
But ah! remembrance of true love
From out the mind will never go.

"O I had once a handsome love,
A famous knight of valour he;
But ah! my step-dame all o'erturn'd,
She vowed our marriage ne'er should be.

"She changed me to a Nightingale,
Bade me around the world to fly;
My Brother she changed to a wolf so gray,
Bade him into the forest hie.

"She told him, as the wood he sought,
That he should win his shape no more,
'Till he had drunk her heart's blood out,
And that befell when years were o'er.

"It happened on a summer tide,
Amidst the wood she wandered gay,
My brother saw and watched her close,
From 'neath the bushes where he lay.

"He seized her quickly by the foot,
All with his laidly wolfish claw;
Tore out her heart, and drank her blood,
And thus released himself he saw.

"Yet I am still a little bird,
And o'er the verdant meads I fly;
So sorrowful I pass my life,
But mostly 'neath the winter's sky.

"But God be thanked, he me has waked,
And speech from him my tongue has won;
For fifteen years I have not spoke
As I with thee, Sir Knight, have done.

"But ever with a mournful voice,
Have sung the green wood bough upon;
And had no better dwelling place
Than gloomy forests, sad and lone."

"Now hear, thou little Nightingale,
This simple thing would I propose,
In winter sit within my bower,
And hie thee forth when summer blows."

"O many thanks, thou handsome knight
Thy offer would I accept full fane;
But ah, my step-dame that forbade
Whilst still in feather I remain."

The Nightingale sat musing deep,
Unto the knight she paid no heed,
Until he seized her by the foot,
For God I ween had so decreed.

He carried her to his chamber in,
The doors and windows fast he made;
Then changed she to the strangest beasts
That ever mortal eye survey'd.

A lion now, and now a bear,
And now a coil of hissing snakes;
At last a Dragon she became,
And furious she the knight attacks.

He cut her with a little knife,
So that her blood did stain the floor;
Then straight before his eye there stood
A Damsel bright as any flower.

"Now, Damsel fair, I've rescued thee
From thraldom drear and secret care;
Now tell me of thy ancestry,
Thy parents and thy race declare."

"My father he was England's King,
My mother was his lovely Queen;
My brother once a grey wolf was,
And trotted o'er the wold so green."

"If England's King thy father was,
And thy dear mother England's Queen,
Thou art my sister's daughter then,
Who long a Nightingale has been."

O there was joy throughout the land,
And all the court was filled with glee;
The Knight has caught the Nightingale,
That dwelt within the linden tree.

THE VALKYRIE AND RAVEN

Ye men wearing bracelets
Be mute whilst I sing
Of Harald the hero—
High Norroway's king;
I'll duly declare
A discourse which I heard,
Betwixt a bright maiden
And black raven bird.

The Valkyrie's vext
No war-field to find;
The speech she knew well
Of the wild feather'd kind,
And thus she bespake him
Who bears the brown bill,
So proud as he perch'd on
The peak of the hill.

"What do you here, ravens,
And whence come ye, say,
Your heads turn'd direct to
The dying sun's ray?
Bits of flesh hold your claws—
There's blood flowing free
From your beaks, surely nigh
Dead bodies there be."

Then wiping his beak,
Bloody red, on the rock,
The eagle's sworn brother
Thus answer'd and spoke:
"Harald we've follow'd,
Of Halfdan the son,
Ever since from the egg
That we egress have won."

"Then ye know, bird, the king,
Whose keep is in Kvine,
The young king—the Norse king—
Whose keels cut the brine;

Red-rimm'd are his bucklers,
  Betarr'd are his oars—
His sails are all bleach'd
  With the sea-spray and showers.'

"Abroad will drink Yule,
  The young king, and will try
To wake up, O maiden,
  The wild game of Frey,
Of the warmth of the hearth
  He weary is grown;
He loathes the close chamber
  And cushions of down.

"Heard ye not the hard fight
  Near Hafirsfirth beach,
'Twixt the king of high kindred
  And Kotva the rich?
Sail'd ships from the East
  Prepared for war stern;
Their dragon heads gaped,
  Their gilded sides burn.

"They were fill'd with proud freemen
Well furnish'd with shields,
And the very best weapons
The western land yields;
Grimly the Baresarkers
Grinn'd, biting steel,—
Howl'd the wolf-heathens
War madness they feel.

"They moved 'gainst the monarch
Whose might makes them pine,
'Gainst the king—the Norse king—
Who keeps court at Utstein;
Flinch'd the king's bark at first,
For they ply'd her right well—
There was hammering on helmets
Ere Haklangr fell.

"Left the land to the lad
With the locks long and full,
Rich Kotva, the lord,
Thick of neck, like the bull;

'Neath the thwarts themselves threw,
They who'd wounds, in despair,
Their heads to the keel
And their heels to the air.

"On their shoulders their shields,
Such as Swafni's roof form,
Flinging swift as a fence
From the fierce stony storm;
The yeomen affrighted
From Hafirsfirth speed,
And arrived at their homes
They call hoarsely for mead.

"The slain strew the strand
To the very great joy
Of ourselves and of Odin,
The chief of one eye."

Valkyrie.

"Of his wars and his prowess
With wonder I've heard;
Now speak of his wives
And his women, O bird!"

Raven.

"He had damsels from Holmygg
And Hordaland, too;
And damsels from Hedemark
Dainty of hue;
But he sent them with gifts
To their countries again,
When he wedded Ranhilda
The beautiful Dane."

Valkyrie.

"I warrant he's bounteous!
And well doth reward
The warriors and gallants
His kingdom who guard."

Raven.

"O, yes, he is bounteous!
And bravely they fare
Who in Harald's dominions
Hew food for the bear;

With coin he presents them,
And keen polish'd glaives,
With mail from Hungaria
And Osterland slaves."

"O happy lives have they
Who help him in war,
Can run to the mast-head
Or manage the oar;
Make the row-locks to creak,
And the row-bench to crack,
And in their lord's service
Are never found slack."

Valkyrie.

"Of the Skalds now I'll ask thee,
The sons of the strain,
By whom deathless honor
He hopes to obtain;
I doubt not, O Raven,
That thou knowest well
The workers of verse
Who at Harald's court dwell."

Raven.

"By their gallant array,
By the armlets they bear
All of gold, you may learn
To their lord they are dear;
Ruddy kirtles they have
That are laced at the skirts,
Swords silver inlaid,
And steely mail shirts:
All gilded their hilts,
Their helmets all graven;
Gold rings on their hands."

Valkyrie.

"Now read me, O Raven,
Of the Baresarkers—how
Do ye style them who wade
In blood ankle-deep
By no danger dismay'd?"

Raven.

"Wolf-heathens they hight,
To the thick of the fray
Ruddy shields who do bear,
And with swords clear away;
None but those who know nought
Of terror can stand
When stout and strong men
Shiver buckler with brand."

Valkyrie.

"Of jesting and game
Our discourse shall be brief;
What does Andadr do,
Harald's jester in chief?"

Raven

"Fun Andadr loves;
He makes faces and sneers,
And the monarch doth laugh
At the loon without ears.

There are others who bear
  Burning brands from the fire
Stick a torch 'neath their belt,
  Yet ne'er singe their attire ;
Some that dance on their heels,
  Or that tumble and spring—
O 'tis gay in the hall
  Of high Harald the king!"

ERIK EMUN AND SIR PLOG

EARLY at morn the lark sang gay—
(*All underneath so green a hill*)
Sir Carl by his bed put on his array—
(*The Danish King will 'venge his fill*).

He drew on his shirt as white as milk,
Then his doublet foisted with verdant silk.

His legs in his buckskin boots he placed,
And around them his gilded spurs he braced.

His gilded spurs there around he braced,
And away to the Ting he rode in haste.

Sir Carl he galloped along the way,
Such wondrous things he proved that day.

Sir Carl he galloped up to the Ting,
The crowd before him scattering.

To warriors nine the Dane-king cries :
" Bind ye Sir Carl before my eyes."

Up then amain the nine warriors rise,
They bound Sir Carl 'fore their sovereign's eyes.

And out from the town Sir Carl they convey'd,
And upon a new wheel his body laid.

To Sir Plog then quickly a messenger came :
" The Dane-king has broken thy brother's frame."

Sir Plog he sprang o'er the wide, wide board,
But returned in answer no single word.

In his buckskin boots his shanks he cased
And around his gilded spurs he braced.

His gilded spurs there around he tied,
And away to the Ting the noble hied.

And fast and furious was his course,
So leapt and bounded his gallant horse.

Up, up to the Ting Sir Plog he goes,
And up to receive him the Dane-king rose.

"If I had been earlier here to-day,
Then things had turned out in a better way.

"My brother is wheeled though he did no wrong,
That deed, Dane-king, thou shalt rue ere long.

"If four hours sooner I had but come,
My brother, for certain, had followed me home.

"Deprived of his life doth my brother lie,
Dane-king, thou hast lost thine honour thereby."

The Dane-king so fitting an answer returned:
"Thy brother full richly his death had earned.

"When the great with sword can oppress the
mean
The law is not worth a rotten bean."

"My brother, Sir King, was good and bold,
I could have redeemed him with silver and gold."

"Thy silver and gold I hold at nought,
The law shall have the course it ought.

"And since thou so long on this matter doth
prate,
Thou shalt suffer the very same fate."

To warriors nine the Dane-king cries :
"Bind ye Sir Plog before my eyes."

"If a truly brave man, Dane-king, thou be,
Do thou thyself bind and fetter me."

The King off his hands the little gloves took,
Sir Plog his spear with vehemence shook.

He first slew four, then five he slew,
And the Dane-king himself with his warriors true.

When all the King's men he dead had laid,
His gallant brother he home convey'd.

To Ribe the royal corse they bear,
Where it rests 'neath a tomb of marble fair.

But Sir Plog he went to a foreign shore,
No word they heard of him evermore.

THE ELVES

Take heed, good people, of yourselves ;
And oh ! beware ye of the elves.

Once a peasant young and gay
Was in his meadow cutting hay,
There came a lovely looking lass
From out the neighbouring morass.
The lass he woo'd, her promise won,
And soon the bridal day came on.
But when the pair had got to bed,
The bridegroom found, with fear and dread,
That he a rough oak stump embrac'd,
Instead of woman's lovely waist.
Then, to increase his fear and wonder,
There sang a voice his window under :

"Come out to her whom thou didst wed,
Upon my mead the bed is spread."
From that wild lay the peasant knew
He with a fay had had to do.

Take heed, good people, of yourselves;
And oh! beware ye of the elves.

FERIDUN

No face of an Angel could Feridun claim,
Nor of musk nor of amber I ween was his frame;
In bright genero-ity beauteous was he,
Be generous like him and as fair thou shalt be.

EPIGRAMS

1.

A worthless thing is song, I trow,
From out the heart which does not flow ;
But song from out no heart will flow
Which does not feel of love the glow.

2.

Though pedants have essayed to hammer
Into our heads the points of grammar ;
We're oft obliged to set at nought
The different force of *should* and *ought* ;
And oft are sorely puzzled whether
We should make use of *both* or *either*.

3.

When of yourself you have cause to speak
Always make yourself broad and tall ;
Envy attacks you if you are great,
But thorough contempt attends the small.

LONDON:

Printed for THOMAS J. WISE, Hampstead, N.W.

Edition limited to Thirty Copies.

THE VERNER RAVEN

THE COUNT OF VENDEL'S DAUGHTER

AND OTHER BALLADS

BY

GEORGE BORROW

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THE VERNER RAVEN

THE Raven he flies in the evening tide,
He in day dares not intrude ;
Whoever is born to have evil luck
In vain may seek for good.

Lustily flies the Verner Raven,
High o'er the wall he's flown,
For he was aware that Irmindlin fair
Sate in her bower alone.

He southward flew, and he northward flew,
He flew high up in the cloud ;
And he beheld May Irmindlin
Who sorrowing sate and sew'd.

"Now hear me, little Irmindlin,
Why weep in this piteous way?
For father or mother, or is it for brother,
That adown thy cheek tears stray?"

It was Damsel Irmindlin,
Swift out of the window looked she:
"O who is he that will comfort me,
And list to my misery?

"Hear thou, wild Raven, bird of Death,
Fly thou hither down to me;
And all my trouble and all my care
I'll straight relate to thee.

"My father gave me the son of a king,
We were fitted the one for the other,
But he was into the Austrian land
Dispatched by my cruel step-mother.

"So happily we should together have lived,
For he my whole love won;
But she wished to give me her sister's son,
Who was liker a fiend than a man.

"I had a gallant brother once,
Sir Verner by name was he,
But he was transformed by my cruel step-dame
And driven to a strange countrie."

"Hear thou, Damsel Irmindlin,
What wilt thou give me, say?
"I'll carry thee straight to thy plighted youth,
If with me thou wilt fly away."

"Thou shalt from me the ruddy gold,
And the silver white receive;
If thou bear me to my Bridegroom bold,
And me from my woe relieve."

"Keep thou thyself thy silver and gold,
Such gifts I do not crave;
The first son thou conceivest of him,
That, that from thee I'll have."

Then straight she took the Raven's foot,
Laid that her white hand upon;
She swore to him by her Christian faith,
That he should have the son.

Then took he Damsel Irmindlin,
He placed her on his back ;
Then flew he over the wild sea waves
As fast as he could track.

It was the Verner Raven wild,
On the turret he alighted :
" Now sit we, Damsel, upon the house,
Where dwells thy Bridegroom plighted."

Out came bold Sir Nilaus,
A silver cup in his hand :
" Be welcome, Damsel Irmindlin,
Here to this foreign land !

" What shall I give to thee, Raven wild,
That hast brought to me my Bride ?
No better tidings I have heard,
Since from Denmark forth I hied."

Thanks be to brave Sir Nilaus,
He kept his faith so well ;
The Monday next that followed,
His bridal it befell.

They their bridal solemnised
With glee and utmost joy ;
When forty weeks away had flown
She brought into the world a boy.

It was the Verner Raven,
Perched on the turret tall :
"What thou did'st promise me, Irmindlin,
To thy mind I'd have thee call."

So sorely she wept, and her hands she smote,
Because it a girl was not :
"Thee shall the wild Death Raven have,
That will cost thee thy life, I wot !"

There came flying over the house
The Raven, with looks to scare ;
So sorely then wept both Maidens and Dames,
And their hands wrung in despair.

Sir Nilaus went, and proffered the bird
Proud castles many a one ;
He proffered him even the half of his land
If he only might keep his son.

"If I get not the little babe,
Thou sorely shall rue it straight,
Thee I limb from limb will tear
And thy kingdom devastate."

She has taken the babe, and in linen white
Hath wrapped it tenderly;
"Farewell, farewell, my dearest son,
Thou owest thy death to me."

Then bore they out the little babe,
On its mother's breast that lay;
O'er the cheeks of all did big tears fall,
Such woe was and wail that day.

The Raven took the child in his claw,
He croaked in joyous guise;
Sir Nilaus stood and looked thereon,
Pouring forth bitter sighs.

Then tore he amain its right eye out,
Drank the half of its heart's red blood;
Then he became the handsomest knight
That upon earth e'er stood

He changed into the loveliest knight
That with eye man ever had seen:
It was Irmindlin's brother himself,
Who had long enchanted been.

All the folk that stood thereby,
They fell upon their knees bare;
And the child it was to life restored
When to God they had made their prayer.

Now sitteth Dame Irmindlin so glad,
All her grief has from her hied;
For she has now both brother and son,
And sleeps by Sir Nilaus' side.

THE COUNT OF VENDEL'S DAUGHTER

Within a bower the womb I left,
'Midst dames and maids who stood to aid:
They wrapped me first in silken weft,
And next in scarlet red array'd.

But a stepdame soon 'twas my lot to get,
And fierce and wild she proved to me;
Within a coffer me she set,
And pushed it out upon the sea.

By one wave I was borne to land,
And by the next away was ta'en;
But God on High, it seems, had plann'd,
That I should footing there obtain.

The tide it drove me to the shore,
And in its backward course retook ;
Sure ne'er had child of king before
Such buffeting on sea to brook.

But God He help'd me, so that I
Was cast above the billows' reach ;
And soon a savage wolf drew nigh,
Was prowling on the sandy beach.

Soon prowling came a wolf so gray,
And me up-taking in his jaws,
He carried me with care away
Deep, deep into the forest shaws.

That self-same wolf he was so kind
That me beneath a tree he laid ;
And then came running a nimble hind,
And me unto its lair convey'd.

There me for winter one she nurs'd—
She nursed me for two winters' space.
To creep, to creep, I learnt at first,
And next I learnt to pace, to pace.

And I was full eight years, I wot,
Within the quiet, green retreat.
Close couched beside the hind I got
Full many a slumber calm and sweet.

I had clothes and shelter of no kind,
Except the linden green alone ;
And, save the gentle forest hind,
Had nurse and foster-mother none.

But forth on courser reeking hot
There rushed a knight of bearing bold,
And he my foster-mother shot
With arrow on the verdant wold.

He pierced the hind with mortal wound,
And all our fond connection cut ;
Then wrapped his cloak my frame around,
And me within his buckler put.

That self-same knight, so bold and strong,
Within his bower the foundling bred ;
He tended me both well and long,
And finally his bride he made.

He had by long inquiry found
  My father was a noble count
In Vendel's land, who castles own'd,
  And rul'd o'er many a plain and mount.

The first night we together slept
  Was fraught with woe of darkest hue ;
Foes, whom he long at bay had kept,
  Broke in on us, and him they slew.

The night we lay together first
  A deed of horror was fulfill'd ;
The bride-house door his foemen burst,
  And in my arms my husband kill'd.

Soon, soon, my friends to counsel go,
  A husband new they chose for me ;
The cloister's prior of mitred brow—
  The good Sir Nilaus styl'd was he.

But soon as I the threshold cross'd,
  The nuns could not their fury smother ;
They vow'd by God and all His Host,
  The Prior Nilaus was my brother.

Forth from the cloister him they drew,
They pelted him to death with stones;
I stood close by, and all could view,
I scarce could hear his piteous moans.

Once more my friends to counsel hied,
For me another spouse they get—
Son of the King of England wide
Was he, and hight Sir Engelbret.

Nine winters with that princely youth
I lived; of joy we had no dearth,
I tell to ye, for sooth and truth,
To ten fair sons that I gave birth.

But pirate crews the land beset,
No one, no one, my grief could tell;
They slew with sword Sir Engelbret,
And nine of my fair sons as well.

My husband and my sons with brand
They slew. How I bewail their case!
My tenth son bore they from the land—
I never more shall see his face.

Now is my care as complicate
  As golden threads which maidens spin;
God crown with bliss Sir Engelbret,
  He ever was so free from sin.

But now I'll take the holy vows,
  Within the cloister under Ey;
I'll ne'er become another's spouse,
  But in religion I will die.

But first to all the country side
  I will declare my bosom's grief;
I find, the more my grief I hide,
  The less, the less, is my relief.

THE CRUEL MOTHER-IN-LAW

FROM his home and his country Sir Volmor should fare,
His wife he commends to his mother's best care.

Proud Lyborg she sang, as the dancers she watched,
Behind stood Dame Ingeborg, malice she hatched.

"To live to the Fall if the luck I enjoy
Fair lady, thy beautiful voice I'll destroy."

Proud Lyborg's fair maidens upon the floor sprang,
And all through the evening she unto them sang.

But alack two short summer days scarcely had
pass'd,
When in desperate sickness proud Lyborg lay
fast.

Proud Lyborg fell sick, and lay stretched on her
bed,
Then backwards and forwards Dame Ingeborg
sped.

"Now hear me, Dame Ingeborg, dear mother
mine,
Do bring me, I pray, either water or wine."

"The water is frozen, and frozen the wine,
And frozen the tap in each barrel of mine.

"The door it is locked, and the keys are away,
But where, daughter dear, by the Saints I can't
say."

"If I can nor water nor wine from thee win,
Then open the door that the dew may rush in.

"Cause the door to the North to be wide open set,
Then my feverish frame cool refreshment shall get."

"The door to the South I'll have straightway undone,
That the hot sun may flash in thy visage upon."

"O would there were one that for sweet pity's sake,
To my mother a message in secret would take."

Then answer'd proud Lyborg's own little foot-boy:
"Your message in secret I'll carry with joy."

That they were alone they with confidence thought;
Dame Ingeborg stood nigh, and every word caught.

The lad he upsprang on his courser so high,
He galloped as fast as the wingèd birds fly.

In, in came the lad, in a kirtle red drest:
"Your daughter, Dame Lyborg, in death will soon rest.

"She bids you to come with all possible quickness,
To live through this night she can't hope from her sickness."

Straight unto her servants proud Mettelil says:
"My horses go fetch from the meads where they graze."

The horses they galloped, the chariot wheels turned,
Throughout the long day whilst the summer heat burned.

The midsummer's sun with such fury it glows
Proud Lyborg swoons 'neath it in terrible throes.

A purse takes Dame Ingeborg fraught with gold treasure,
And she speeds to the hall, her heart bounding with pleasure.

"Whosoever will gold and will bounty derive,
Let him help me to bury proud Lyborg alive."

Soon as she of the gold distribution had made,
Below the black earth the fair lily they laid.

To the gate of the castle proud Mettelil came,
Dame Ingeborg stood there, and leaned on the same.

"Proud Ingeborg, hear what I say unto thee:
What hast done with my daughter? declare that to me!"

"But yesterday 'twas that with sorrowful mind,
Her corse to the arms of the grave we consign'd."

"Proud Ingeborg, hush thee, nor talk in this guise,
But show me the grave where my dear daughter lies."

As soon as Dame Mettelil o'er the place trod,
Proud Lyborg she screamed underneath the green sod.

"Whoever will gold and will silver obtain,
Let him help me to dig now with might and with main."

They took up proud Lyborg, all there as she lay,
Her mother flung o'er her the scarlet array.

"Now tell to me, Lyborg, thou child of my heart,
Since restored to the arms of thy mother thou art,

"What death to thy thinking should Ingeborg thole,
For placing thee living in horrid grave-hole?"

"To destroy my young life it is true, she was bent,
But let her live, mother, and let her repent."

"That she go unpunished I cannot permit,
I'll teach her what 'tis on a fire to sit."

To two of her servants proud Mettelil spake:
"Do ye quickly a fire on the open field make.

"Do ye cut down the oak and the bonny ash-tree,
That the fire by them fed may burn brilliant and free."

Dame Ingeborg forth from the house they convey'd,
And they burnt her to dust on the fire they had made.

Sir Volmor came home from the red field of strife,
Then tidings assailed him, with dolour so rife.

Then tidings assailed him, with dolour so rife,
Burnt, burnt was his mother, and flown was his wife.

He bade for proud Lyborg of red gold a store,
But he could the lily obtain nevermore.

THE FAITHFUL KING OF THULE

A KING so true and steady
  In Thule lived of old;
To him his dying lady
  A goblet gave of gold.

He drank thereout so often,
  For all his love it gained;
To tears his eyes would soften
  Whene'er its juice he drained.

When death drew nigh, his spirit
  His riches o'er he told
To him who should inherit—
  But not that cup of gold.

By all his knights surrounded
One day he sat at dine,
In hall of fortress, founded
By ocean's roaring brine.

The ancient hero rallies
With one more draught his blood,
Then casts the sacred chalice
Below him in the flood.

Deep, deep within the billows
He watched it as it sank;
Then, sinking on his pillows,
No drop more e'er he drank.

THE FAIRIES' SONG

Balmy the evening air,
  Nature, how bright the hue!
But, though the bloom is fair
  The sense with sweets to woo,
Love, Music, Mirth, Oh give!
  On these we Fairies live!

The glow-worm's amorous lamp
  Recalls her wandering mate;
Their revel in the swamp
  Outshines the halls of State.
Then, Spirits, hither fly,
  And match their revelry!

The Bat is on the wing,
  And Gnats, what reels they run!
In wide or narrow ring,
  An atmosphere of fun.
Then let us to the dance,
  And feet like midges glance!

LONDON
Printed for THOMAS J. WISE, Hampstead, N.W.
Edition limited to Thirty Copies.

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THE RETURN OF THE DEAD

Swayne Dyring o'er to the island strayed ;
And were I only young again !
He wedded there a lovely maid—
To honied words we list so fain.

Together they lived seven years and more ;
And were I only young again !
And seven fair babes to him she bore—
To honied words we list so fain.

Then death arrived in luckless hour ;
And were I only young again !
Then died the lovely lily flower—
To honied words we list so fain.

The Swayne he has crossed the salt sea way,
And were I only young again !
And he has wedded another may—
To honied words we list so fain.

And he that may to his home has brought ;
And were I only young again !
But peevish was she, and with malice fraught—
To honied words we list so fain.

And when she came to the castle gate,
And were I only young again !
The seven children beside it wait—
To honied words we list so fain.

The children stood in sorrowful mood,
And were I only young again !
She spurned them away with her foot so rude—
To honied words we list so fain.

Nor bread nor meat will she bestow ;
And were I only young again !
Said "Hate ye shall have and the hunger throe"—
To honied words we list so fain.

She took away the bolsters blue ;
And were I only young again !
"Bare straw will serve for the like of you"—
To honied words we list so fain.

Away she's ta'en the big wax light ;
And were I only young again !
Said she "Ye shall lie in the murky night"—
To honied words we list so fain.

The babies at night with hunger weep ;
And were I only young again !
The woman heard that in the grave so deep—
To honied words we list so fain.

To God's high throne such haste she made ;
And were I only young again !
"O I must go to my babies' aid"—
To honied words we list so fain.

She begged so loud, and she begged so long,
And were I only young again !
That at length consent from her God she wrung—
To honied words we list so fain.

"But thou must return when the cock shall crow,
And were I only young again!
"No longer tarry must thou below"—
To honied words we list so fain.

Then up she struck with her stark thigh bone,
And were I only young again!
And burst through wall and marble stone—
To honied words we list so fain.

And when to the dwelling she drew nigh,
And were I only young again!
The hounds they yelled to the clouds so high—
To honied words we list so fain.

And when to the castle gate she won,
And were I only young again!
Her eldest daughter stood there alone—
To honied words we list so fain.

"Hail daughter mine, what dost thou here?
And were I only young again!
How fare thy brothers and sisters dear?"—
To honied words we list so fain.

"O dame thou art no mother of mine,
And were I only young again!
For she was a lady fair and fine—
To honied words we list so fain.

"A lady fine with cheeks so red,
And were I only young again!
But thou art pale as the sheeted dead"—
To honied words we list so fain.

"O how should I be fine and sleek?
And were I only young again!
How else than pale should be my cheek?—
To honied words we list so fain.

"And how should I be white and red?
And were I only young again!
Beneath the mould I've long been dead"—
To honied words we list so fain.

And when she entered the high, high hall,
And were I only young again!
Drowned with tears stood the babies all—
To honied words we list so fain.

The one she combed, the other she brushed,
And were I only young again!
The third she dandled, the fourth she hushed—
To honied words we list so fain.

The fifth upon her breast she plac'd,
And were I only young again!
And allowed the babe of the breast to taste—
To honied words we list so fain.

To her eldest daughter she turned her eye;
And were I only young again!
"Go call Swayne Dyring instantly"—
To honied words we list so fain.

And when Swayne Dyring before her stood,
And were I only young again!
She spake to him thus in wrathful mood—
To honied words we list so fain.

"I left behind both ale and bread;
And were I only young again!
My children with hunger are nearly dead—
To honied words we list so fain.

"I left behind me bolsters blue ;
And were I only young again !
Upon bare straw my babes I view—
To honied words we list so fain.

"I left behind the big wax light ;
And were I only young again !
My children lie in the murk at night—
To honied words we list so fain.

"If again I'm forced to seek thee here,
And were I only young again !
Befall thee shall a fate so drear—
To honied words we list so fain.

"But hark ! the ruddy cock has crow'd,
And were I only young again !
The dead must return to their abode—
To honied words we list so fain.

"I hear, I hear the black cock crow ;
And were I only young again !
The gates of heaven are opening now—
To honied words we list so fain.

The white cock claps his wings so wide,
And were I only young again !
No longer here I dare to bide "—
To honied words we list so fain.

Each time the dogs began to yell,
And were I only young again !
They gave the children bread and ale—
To honied words we list so fain.

As soon as they heard of the hounds the cry,
And were I only young again !
They feared the ghost was drawing nigh—
To honied words we list so fain.

Whene'er the dogs were heard to rave,
And were I only young again !
They feared the woman had left her grave—
To honied words we list so fain.

THE TRANSFORMED DAMSEL

I TAKE my axe upon my back,
To fell the tree I mean;
Then came the man the wood who owned,
And thrust his heft between.

"If thou hew down my father's grove,
And me this damage do,
If I but see thee fell the tree
Thou dearly that shalt rue."

"O let me hew this single tree,
Nor to resist me seek;
Unless I yonder bird obtain
With grief my heart will break."

" Now list thou fair and gallant swain,
To me incline thine ear!
Thou ne'er wilt yonder bird obtain
Unless some bait thou bear."

From off my breast the bait I cut,
And hung it on the bough:
The breast it bled, the bait it reeked,
Mine is the birdie now.

Down flew the lovely little bird,
Fluttering its wings o'erjoyed;
It seemed to smile as if the guile
It knew that I employed.

It clawed and picked so hastily,
So well did smack the bait;
And still the more it seemed to please
The more the birdie ate.

Down flew the lovely little bird,
Alighting on the sand;
The loveliest damsel she became,
And gave the youth her hand.

THE FORCED CONSENT

WITHIN her own fair castelaye
There goes a damsel bright;
A whole year's tide for her has sighed
A young and handsome knight.

"Now do thou hear, thou beauteous maid,
Could I thy troth obtain,
Then thou shouldst tread on silk outspread,
And ne'er on the earth again.

And do thou hear, my lovely maid,
My wedded lady be,
And the slighest care thou shalt not bear
If I can save it thee."

" I've vowed an oath to Mary maid,
And to keep it is my plan ;
Ne'er live will I beneath the sky
With any sinful man.

" Here with my seven brothers bold
To-morrow I will come ;
Yourself array in costly way,
For you must follow us home."

It was the young and handsome knight,
He out of the doorway springs ;
And he in haste the Runes has traced,
And them on her lap she flings.

And so he cast the magic Rune
The maiden's dress below ;
Then beat her heart, and blood did start
From her finger nails I trow.

" If thou with thy seven brothers bold
To-morrow here wilt come,
Myself I'll array in costly way
And follow ye to your home."

The very next morn, the very next morn,
When rose the sun in gold,
Full three times ten bold knightly men
Were waiting on the wold.

Full three times ten bold knightly men,
On a bonny grey steed each one;
With silk so white was the courser dight
Which the maid should ride upon.

But what think ye that maiden did
Ere mounting on her horse?
A draught she drank of poison rank,
Thought death her wisest course.

Through the shallow streams they dashed their steeds,
Through the deep their steeds they swam;
And ever and anon the maid would groan,
"How dreadfully ill I am."

And when they came to the house of the knight,
Where the bridal kept should be;
Spread out on the earth was silk of worth,
And gold so red of blee.

"Now thou may'st see, my lady love,
That I my promise hold;
Now thou dost tread on silk outspread,
And not on the earth so cold."

"There's spread enough of the silken stuff,
And plenty of gold is strown;
But better I ween in heaven sheen
With our Father God to wone."

Then they led her to the high, high hall,
And in scarlet her array'd;
But their joy was brief, soon came their grief,
She died alack a maid!

Thanks be to him the youthful knight,
No truer e'er was seen;
He built her a grave in the church, and gave
The churchmen farms fifteen.

Then as he stood by the maiden's grave,
The gallant young noble cried:
"O would to God beneath the sod
I were lying by her side!"

INGEBORG'S DISGUISE

Such handsome court clothes the proud Ingeborg buys,
Says she "I'll myself as a courtier disguise."

Proud Ingeborg hastens her steed to bestride,
Says she "I'll away with the King to reside."

"Thou gallant young King to my speech lend an ear,
Hast thou any need of my services here?"

"O yes, my sweet lad, of a horseboy I've need,
If there were but stable room here for his steed.

"But thy steed in the stall with my own can be tied,
And thou 'neath the linen shalt sleep by my side."

Three years in the palace good service she wrought,
That she was a woman no one ever thought.

She filled for three years of a horse-boy the place,
And the steeds of the monarch she drove out to graze.

She led for three years the King's steeds to the brook,
For else than a youth no one Ingeborg took.

Proud Ingeborg knows how to make the dames gay,
She also can sing in such ravishing way.

The hair on her head is like yellow spun gold,
To her beauty the heart of the prince was not cold.

But at length up and down in the palace she strayed,
Her colour and hair began swiftly to fade.

What eye has seen ever so wondrous a case?
The boy his own spurs to his heel cannot brace.

The horse-boy is brought to so wondrous a plight,
To draw his own weapon he has not the might.

The son of the King to five damsels now sends,
And Ingeborg fair to their care he commends.

Proud Ingeborg took they and wrapped in their weed,
And to the stone chamber with her they proceed.

Upon the blue cushions they Ingeborg laid,
Where light of two beautiful sons she is made.

Then in came the prince, smiled the babies to view:
"'Tis not every horse-boy can bear such a two."

He patted her soft on her cheek sleek and fair:
"Forget my heart's dearest all sorrow and care."

He placed the gold crown on her temples I ween:
"With me shalt thou live as my wife and my Queen."

SONG

I've pleasure not a little
A dancing youth to see,
Nor less—one single tittle—
An old man full of glee.

To dance I ever glory
With those of youthful mien ;
It shows, although I'm hoary
In hair, my mind is green.

London :
Printed for THOMAS J. WISE, Hampstead, N.W.
Edition limited to Thirty copies.

AXEL THORDSON AND FAIR VALBORG

A BALLAD

BY

GEORGE BORROW

LONDON:
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AXEL THORDSON AND FAIR VALBORG.

At the wide board at tables play,
With pleasure and with glee abounding
The ladies twain in fair array,
The game they play is most astounding.

How fly about the dies so small,
Such sudden turnings are they making ;
And so does Fortune's wheel withal,
We scarcely know the route 'tis taking.

Dame Julli grand, and Malfred Queen,
At tables were their time employing ;
Not distant on the floor was seen
A child with pear and apple toying.

Upon the floor the child it walked,
It played with apples and with flowers ;
Then in Sir Axel Thordson stalked,
Was bound for Rome's imperial towers.

He greets the Dames repeatedly,
At courtesy he had no master ;
He loved the child in secrecy,
But fate had doomed them much disaster.

His eyeballs brimming full of tears
Full tenderly her cheek he patted :
" O would thou wast of fitting years,
With Axel Thordson to be mated ! "

Answered his youngest sister straight,
Thus answered she her gallant brother :
" Though she this night to woman's state
Had won, ye might not wed each other."

Answered the Damsel's mother high,
And she the simple truth has stated :
" A worthy pair I don't deny,
But, oh ! ye are too near related."

A gold ring off his arm he drew,
To play with that he fondly bade her;
To years of reason when she grew
To palen and to pine it made her.

"That I've betrothed thee, little bride,
In mind I beg that thou wilt carry;
And now from out the land I'll ride,
With foreign masters long to tarry."

Sir Axel out of the country hied,
His breast with love and valour glowing.
In cloister they have placed his bride,
Instruction to receive in sewing.

They taught to her the silken seam,
They taught her writing, taught her reading;
Through land and city soon the fame
Of Valborg's virtue goes, and breeding.

The noble ways that she displays
Attract the general admiration,
And though full young she's ranked among
The very sages of the nation.

And there eleven years she stay'd,
Till God had called away her mother;
The Queen to court then took the maid,
Selecting her 'fore every other.

Served at the Emperor's court meantide
The knight, with gold his spurs were glaring;
A glittering faulchion decked his side,
And truly knightly was his bearing.

Sir Axel lies in pomp and state
As well bescems so rich a noble;
But he at night no rest can get,
His dreams are full of woe and trouble.

Sir Axel in the chamber high
Doth lie on softest silk and fairest,
But sleep alas has fled his eye,
He's ever thinking of his dearest.

Sir Emmer's child, his Valborg fair,
He dreamt sat drest in costly fashion;
And Hogen, son of the King, by her
Sat softly pleading for his passion.

The morning sun its lustre shed,
The lark's sweet voice on high was ringing;
Sir Axel started from his bed,
His clothes upon him swiftly flinging.

He saddled straight his good grey horse,
Within the wood he'll take his pleasure;
His dreams from out his head he'll force
By listening to the wild bird's measure.

When to the wood Sir Axel wan,
Where blushing roses thick were growing;
In foreign garb he met a man
Upon a pilgrimage was going.

"Now pilgrim good a merry morn,
Say, whither, whither art thou faring?
Thou'rt from the land where I was born,
For that thy vestments are declaring."

"My native land is Norroway,
From Gild's high race I boast my being;
To Rome's famed town I've vowed to stray,
My mind is bent the Pope on seeing."

" From Gildish race if thou be sprung,
Then pilgrim thou art my relation ;
Has Valborg me from memory flung ?
Of her canst give me information ?

" O Valborg is a damsel bright,
There's few than I should know her better ;
Full many a gay and gallant knight
She holds in love's enchanting fetter.

" So well to me the maid is known,
The mard and sable rich she weareth ;
From all the maids at court that wone
The belle, the belle sweet Valborg beareth.

" Upgrown Sir Knight is Valborg now,
A lily she among the daisies ;
Amongst our maidens high or low
No fairer ever met my gazes.

" In earth beside her lord beloved
The good Dame Julli now is sleeping ;
From cloister Valborg is removed,
The Queen is favours on her heaping.

"With strings of pearls her hair is tied,
Around her wrist red gold there gloweth,
She's named 'Sir Axel's bonnie bride'
By every voice where'er she goeth.

"They called her thy betrothed maid,
Sir Axel, but her friends united
Have hope she will Prince Hogen wed,
And with that hope they are delighted."

Sir Axel robed himself that day
In the best guise that he was able,
And to the hall he took his way
Where Emperor Henrik sat at table.

"Hail Henrik Emperor mild of heart,
In whose good grace I've long been basking,
For home that I may straight depart
The freedom I now take of asking.

"My sire and mother both are dead,
Exposed to foes my lands are lying,
Another my betrothed will wed,
And that's the call to me most crying."

"The leave for which thy heart doth yearn
Reluctantly Sir Knight I give thee;
Whene'er it please thee to return
Most gladly I'll Sir Knight receive thee."

Away from court Sir Axel rode,
A gallant band attend behind him;
And all that at the Court abode
Unto the care of God consign'd him.

So fast he speeded on his way,
Him followed thrice ten swains so merry;
But when he reached his castellaye
The noble knight was solitary.

Alone he reached his castle good,
His gallant courser panting, snorting:
And there his sister Helfred stood,
Against the gate herself supporting.

"Here standst thou, Helfred, sister dear,
Thou little didst expect my coming;
How doth it with sweet Valborg fare,
That roselet 'mongst the flowers blooming?"

"Dear brother well doth Valborg fare
She all our maids exceeds in honor;
The Queen she tends, who's chosen her
Before them all to wait upon her."

"Now rede me, Helfred, sister fine,
Thy very best advice I'm needing;
How can I speak with maiden mine
Apart removed from mortals heeding?"

"The very best of silk put on,
And clothe thee in thy garments fairest;
And say that thou with her alone
Must speak, for thou my message bearest."

It was Sir Axel Thordson, knight,
As he the hall's high steps ascended,
He met Queen Malfred's damsels bright
From evening song as back they wended.

To Valborg he his snowy hand
Extends, with voice of sweetness saying:
"I come from Helfred fair, thy friend,
A private scroll to thee conveying."

The lovely Valborg op'd in haste
And read with beating heart the letter ;
Therein the words of love were trac'd,
No one could have imagined better.

Within it lay five golden rings,
With roses wrought and lilies fairly ;
" Sir Axel Thordson sends these things
Who thee betroth'd in childhood early.

" I have thy word to be my bride,
Now prove thou to thy promise steady ;
On earth so wide or sea's salt tide
I'll ne'er deceive thee, beauteous lady."

Then to a niche proceeded both,
Obeying thus the wish of heaven ;
They vowed an oath when they their troth
Had once more to each other given.

They swore an oath by Mary may,
And eke by Dorothy the sainted,
That in pure honor live would they,
And die in honor pure untainted.

Sir Axel to the King's court rides,
  Delighted now beyond all measure ;
In the Queen's bower Valborg bides,
  And sports and smiles with glee and pleasure

For five months' tide thus matters stood,
  And till nine months had over wended,
Forth stepped eleven counts so good
  And fairly for her hand pretended.

Eleven knights of prowess rare
  Declared their passion well and fairly ;
The twelfth was Hogen, Norway's heir,
  And he pursued her late and early.

" Now do thou hear, O Valborg fine,
  If thou'lt accept me for thy lover
Thou as my lawful Queen shalt shine,
  And Norway's crown thy brows shall cover."

" Now do thou hear, thou King's son high,
  Thy noble love I cannot favour,
For I've betrothed in secrecy
  Sir Axel, and I'll wrong him never."

O then with wrath the King's son shook,
The maid no longer he entreated ;
He smoothed his garb, and him betook
To where his Mother high was seated.

" Hail, hail to thee, dear Mother mine,
What counsel now canst thou award me ?
I've long wooed Valborg, damsel fine,
But, ah ! she deigns not to regard me.

" I proffered hand, I proffered land,
For the proud maiden's acceptation ;
But she loves Axel, and will stand
By him, that was her declaration."

" If Valborg has on him bestowed
Her troth, to keep it is her duty ;
There's many a maid in Norway broad,
My son, of noble birth and beauty."

" Ah ! yes, of maids there's many a one
Abounding both in wealth and graces ;
But ah ! so fair as Valborg none,
Or who such virtue bright possesses."

" Thou canst not gain the maid by force,
For that were crying shame and scandal ;
Shouldst thou to weapons have recourse
His sword Sir Axel well can handle."

Then Hogen grew so wroth in mood,
And as in wrath he left his mother
Before him his confessor stood,
Was called Canute, the sable brother.

" Why goes my Lord with face of gloom.
And whither, whither is he roving ?
If any ill is o'er him come
O let him tell his servant loving."

" Misfortune's come too hard to bear,
Beneath its heavy weight I cower ;
Betrothed has Axel Valborg fair,
To gain her is beyond my power."

" Though Axel to the maid aspires
There's matter shall prevent their mating ;
Within the house of sable friars
Are papers to their birth relating.

"They're children of relations near,
Of knightly race renowned and stately;
Unto the fountain them did bear
One Dame, she died at Hoiborg lately.

"Relations by the fount to be
They by our cloister's law are rated;
Besides we see in third degree
The knight and damsel are related.

"My Lord must to the Chapter write
To meet upon this grave occasion;
The Damsel shall not wed the knight,
For I'll prevent the abomination."

It was Hogen, son of the King,
His little servant lad directed:
"To me the maiden's uncles bring,
And be my bidding straight effected."

The counts before the wide, wide board
Are standing with respectful bearing:
"Thou'st summoned us, our gracious Lord,
Of your high will we crave the hearing."

"I ask of ye your niece so dear
That she may share my pomp and power;
To rank of Queen I her will rear
If on your prince ye will bestow her."

Then straight the uncles three replied,
With joyous eyes each other viewing:
"O she was born in lucky tide,
A noble prince for her is suing."

Then quickly donned their best array,
Her uncles three, those counts of power;
And they together took their way
To good Queen Malfred's lofty bower.

First Malfred Queen saluted they,
In manner as became them duteous;
And then they greeted Valborg may,
Of all the maiden band most beauteous.

"Success attend thee through thy life,
Thou child of her we loved so tender;
Prince Hogen thee doth woo for wife,
And we to him will thee surrender."

"And have ye promised me for wife?
Now my three gentle uncles mind me,
I love Sir Axel dear as life,
And faithless he shall never find me.

Then answered her those counts so bold,
Her uncles three, with fury glaring:
"Ah ne'er shalt thou the promise hold
Which thou to make hast had the daring."

It was Hogen the King's son then
So many letters broad endighted;
With seven times ten of priestly men
The Archbishop he to him invited.

'Twas Master Erland the good and wise
So carefully the brief read over:
"Now shame on him who this device
Did hatch, Canute I here discover."

The Archbishop placed him by the board,
Bowed to the prince his reverend figure:
"Thou'st sent for me, my gracious lord,
To learn thy high commands I'm eager."

"O long have I a maiden woo'd,
And I to wife would gladly take her ;
But most for Axel stands her mood,
Abandon him we now must make her."

They've writ and caused upon the Ting
Be read so solemn a citation,
Which should the hapless couple bring
Before the priestly congregation.

The matin singing was at end,
The sun its rays so freshly darted :
To church Sir Axel now must wend
With Valborg fair the loving hearted.

Upsprang the knight on steed of height,
With sighs his anguish deep declaring ;
In chariot rode the damsel bright,
In bosom locked her sorrow bearing.

First rode the knight on steed of height,
His thoughts so wide and wild were flying ;
Next him in coach the damsel bright
Did ride, to veil her sorrow trying.

Then out and spoke proud Valborg fair,
As they the bridge were passing over:
"A glad heart seldom sighs with care,
Though smiles do oft a sad heart cover."

They stopped Maria's Church before,
And from their steeds they have descended,
In stepped they through the lofty door,
By knights and noble friends attended.

Midst of the Church's aisle they stay'd,
Their steps the advancing Chapter facing;
All saw they were at heart afraid
Who on that luckless two were gazing.

Advanced with silver staff in hand
The Archbishop then, of reverend carriage;
Behind him all the priestly band
Who should forbid the lovers' marriage.

Then forth Canute the brother trode,
With scrolls of pedigree was laden;
And from those scrolls alack he show'd
That near akin were knight and maiden.

The tree of pedigree was read
By the command of that black brother;
They were akin full clear it made,
And both by lineage of the mother.

Descended of a lineage high
Each to the other stood related,
In third degree their affinity,
So priests the pair have separated.

Two cousins they from Gild's root sprung,
A prodigy of virtue either;
Proud Valborg fair and Axel young
Must never, never come together.

What time they were baptized one Dame
Did bear them to the sacred fountain;
Their Godfather he was the same,
His name Sir Asbiorn of the mountain.

Relations they by birth and blood,
Of Gildish race renowned and dreaded;
Relations they beside in God,
Alas! they never can be wedded.

They led them to the shrine, and placed
A kerchief in their hands which quiver;
Their lineage and line are traced,
And priests are bent their bands to sever.

They 'twixt the two the cloth cut through.
A portion each in hand retaineth;
However great and high his state
There's none that o'er his fortune reigneth.

"The handkerchief is parted now,
Ye have parted us for good and ever,
But whilst with life our breasts shall glow
Our love ye shall dissever never."

The gold ring off her hand to take
And bracelet from her wrist they hastened;
His gifts they gave to Axel back,
The knot of love was now unfastened.

The gold he on the altar threw,
To Olave that he consecrated,
And swore to bide to Valborg true
As long as he to live was fated.

Then wroth grew Hogen son of the King,
Who stood his scarlet garb array'd in:
"Since her from mind thou canst not fling
'Tis clear and plain she is no maiden."

Outspoke of the clerks the wisest wight,
E'en Erland he the good Archdeacon:
"The man who does not know the might
Of love an ignorant man I reckon.

"With water we the fire can quench,
And slake the brand that's fiercely glowing,
But though the flame with floods we drench
The flame of love will yet be growing.

"The sun shines bright on hill and plain,
We sink its scorching fury under,
But ah; love's chain is harder pain,
And none can break its links asunder."

Then Axel turned to yonder Lord,
His manly cheek with rage was ruddy:
"To-morrow I'll rebut thy word
Although it cost me life and body."

Then forward on the flagstone wide
The prince advanced, inflamed with passion:
"To-morrow thou an oath," he cried,
"Shalt swear without equivocation.

"Thou on thy sword an oath to me
Shalt swear, and on the brevier holy,
Whether Valborg is a maid for thee
Or whether ye have committed folly."

"Proud prince, if I must take that oath
I it can do with heart approving;
To fight thee ne'er shalt find me loth
Whilst I this hand have power of moving."

That night Dame Eskelin in her bed
Was by her lord Sir Hagen sleeping:
"What have I dream'd?" she, starting, said,
"Saint Bridget take me 'neath thy keeping.

"Methought that Julli fair and mild
Beneath the earth who long has rested,
That I would help her hapless child
So mournfully with tears requested.

"I have full seven sons, my lord,
And each has thirty swains so steady,
They to their loins shall bind the sword
And up and help the beauteous lady.

"And thou shalt saddle ten steeds so free
And ride away like gallant noble,
Heading our house's chivalry
To stand by Valborg in her trouble.

"Full seven sons, my lord, have we,
They all are counts so bold and sprightly;
It is our joy and pride to see
They bear themselves so well and knightly.

"Two cousins I and Julli were—
The peace of God attend upon her!
If I forsake in this affair
Her child 'twill be to our dishonor."

'Twas early in the morning tide,
Rose o'er the wold the sun in lustre;
Within the Castle's halls of pride
The knights to swear the oath now muster.

Then up Sir Axel Thordson rose,
And lifted up his arm of power:
"Come, swear with me, of Gildish house
Ye counts of chivalry the flower."

Then in their sable and mard array
Stepped forward stately knights eleven:
"We'll with Sir Axel swear to-day,
Betide whatever pleases heaven."

Down Valborg's cheek ran tears as fleet
As winter rain when fastest pouring:
"Ah where shall I with friends now meet?
Destruction's voice for me is roaring."

Answered her uncles all with speed,
Their voice it made her ears to tingle:
"As thou wast single in the rede,
So in the oath be also single."

Then up and spake Archdeacon Erland,
That speech has broken all his patience:
"Thou hast not many friends at hand,
Poor maid, though plenty of relations.

"Thou of relations hast a store,
But friends thou canst not one discover;
God help thee in this peril sore,
And may thou all thy woes get over."

"That sire and mother mine are dead,
I've cause I trow to rue sincerely;
But God, who helpeth all in need,
He sees my innocence full clearly.

"Dame Julli sleeps the slab below,
Sir Emmer lies in earth's embraces,
If they but lived my uncles now
Would scarcely turn from me their faces."

And as she sat with cheek so white
And wrung her hands in piteous taking,
Sir Hagen bold appeared in sight,
With speed towards the castle making.

To Valborg strode he hastily,
Behind him all his knightly party:
"My pretty maid to swear with thee
I come to offer free and hearty.

"Full well loves thee Dame Eskelin,
Who every night doth sleep beside me;
Thy Dame and she were close of kin,
And therefore hither have I hied me.

"Step forth my sons, I say the word,
And in the oath be ye partakers;
Ye too, stout sons of Carl, the lord
Of Sondervalley's fertile acres."

Forward eleven warriors trode,
The mard and sable they were wearing,
They all were clad in princely mode,
In tresses each his hair was bearing.

Then forward stepped with dauntless air
Those counts eleven all together;
Their trusty swords were gilded fair,
And gilded was their girdles' leather.

We'll vouch the honour of yonder maid,
And blythe with her the oath embark in;
Ye noble couple forward tread,
And all unto your speech shall hearken."

On the mass book Axel laid his hand,
His good sword holding by the handle ;
By his side stood the knightly band,
All eager to refute the scandal.

The hilt of his brand within his hand,
The point against a flagstone planted,
With demeanour staid the knight he made
The solemn oath from him was wanted.

" 'Tis true I had fair Valborg dear,
I loved none like her under heaven.
But ne'er to her have been so near
A kiss to her I might have given."

Her hand then on the sacred book
The maiden laid with modest bearing :
" Upon Sir Axel's form to look
These eyes had never yet the daring."

They raised a heaven o'er her head,
In dress of gala they installed her ;
To the high hall the maid they led,
' The cherished of the king ' they called her.

In came Hogen the king's son then,
He spake in high exhilaration:
"O there is neither knight nor swain
Shall leave this night my habitation.

"Proud Valborg, from suspicion freed,
I here declare my bosom's dearie;
And she shall be my Queen with speed,
And on her brows the crown shall carry."

The cloth was spread, and down to board
They sat, the skinkers did their duty;
Sir Axel sat, full many a word
Exchanging with his cherish'd beauty.

"Now list, since here apart we be,
O Valborg, thou, my ravished jewel,
Canst form no plan which possibly
May chase from us love's anguish cruel?"

"Sir Axel though to wed I go
The King, 'tis not from inclination;
Though I live years a thousand, thou
Within my heart wilt hold thy station.

"And I will sit in chamber high,
And I'll embroider cap and kirtle:
I'll pass my time so mournfully
E'en like the gentle widow'd turtle.

"Who on the green bough will not rest
Her legs, with weariness which fraught are,
Nor of the limpid pool will taste
Until her feet have soiled the water.

"But Axel thou ride forth with glee,
The hind and savage roe in quest of;
Each thought of me that comes o'er thee
I pray thou wilt thyself divest of.

"My gallant Lord ride forth with glee,
The nimble hare and leveret follow;
All thoughts of me that rise in thee
I beg thee drown in whoop and hollo."

"Though in the green wood I should ride,
And rouse the savage deer from cover,
What should I do in night's still tide
When sleep comes not my eyelids over?

" Forsooth my father's broad estate
I'll sell for gold and silver pieces,
And hie to foreign regions straight,
And pine until my life-pulse ceases."

" My Lord sell not the lands so broad
Your fathers won with toil and slaughter,
But seek Sir Asbiorn's high abode,
And ask of him his lovely daughter.

" His daughter Alhed thou shalt wed,
And with her live in pomp and splendour ;
I'll stand ye in a mother's stead,
And ever kindly service render."

" O I will wed no damsel bright,
When I can vow not faith unshaking ;
The Emperor's daughter I would slight
Since thee my own I've failed in making."

Archdeacon Erland now drew near,
To each a fatherly hand extended :
" Now breathe good-bye, my children dear.
'Tis time that your discourse were ended."

To himself aside the Archdeacon cried,
Was filled with indignation bitter:
"Now shame the black Canute betide,
Of this fond pair the ruthless splitter.

Sir Axel to the lovely maid
Now bids good-night with groans and sighing;
His heart with sorrow down is weigh'd,
Like heart of wretch in fetters lying.

Wends to her chamber Valborg fair,
Her maidens all behind her pacing;
Her heart with anguish and despair
With more than furnace heat was blazing.

Early in the morning tide
The sun began to shine so proudly,
Queen Malfred to her maidens cried
Within her bower oft and loudly.

To work the gold so red of blee
Queen Malfred has her maidens ordered;
But still stood Valborg, still stood she,
Her heart with care was all disordered.

"Now Valborg hear, thou damsel dear,
Why sitt'st thou lonely and dejected?
A joy to thee it sure must be,
Thou art a prince's bride elected."

"Much sooner I, O Queen, would wone
With Axel as his mate, much sooner
Than I would wear Norwegia's crown,
Enjoying all the regal honour.

"'Twill profit me in scanty guise
That all are flatteries on me heaping,
If with the water of my eyes
My pallid cheeks I'm daily steeping."

For many a day thus matters stood,
For many a day till months were ended;
Sir Axel and his damsel good
Their sports and laughs have all suspended.

Then war, fierce war, drew near that clime,
The foes they were in force alarming;
For Hogen, son of the King, 'tis time
To rise and 'gainst his foes be arming.

He summoned his good banner round
All, all his men both clerks and laity;
To the heart of Axel, knight renown'd,
The call to arms brought sudden gaiety.

It was Hogen the King's son bold
Unto the field of battle wended,
And every one who brand could hold
His sovereign to the field attended.

Each man in the land could bear a blade
To fight the foe with him has wended;
Sir Axel he his captain made,
He knew that much on him depended.

Wide o'er the field shone Axel's shield,
That shield which was of white and azure;
Two hearts there stood, both red with blood,
For fame he'll risk his life with pleasure.

Then soon they saw upon the plain
In glittering ranks outspread their foemen;
To fight with men was the question then,
I ween, and not to dance with women.

Sir Axel on that dreadful day
  For country fought in manner fitting ;
Before him knights in steel array
  Are fast their gilded saddles quitting.

He slew so many of noble race,
  And trampled them his warhorse under ;
Not one, not e'en of highest place,
  Was spared by Axel's hand of thunder.

He slew the lords of Oppeland,
  Upon gigantic coursers mounted ;
King Aumund's sons, a stalwart band,
  He slew, who manfully him confronted.

Like hay, which in the loft up fling
  The boors, the yard-long shafts are flying ;
There wounded lies the son of the king,
  Upon the earth is Hogen dying.

And when from steed the King's son fell,
  O there was none that hasted faster
Than the good knight redoubtable,
  Axel, to aid his luckless master.

"Hear, Axel Thordson," Hogen said,
"Avenge my death in gallant fashion,
And thou shalt Norway rule, and wed
The maid we loved with rival passion."

"O I'll revenge, my Lord, thy death,
Or I will do my best endeavour,
For dread of this poor body's scathe,
While life shall last I'll faulter never."

Now speed, his eyeballs gleaming wrath,
Sir Axel 'mongst the hostile forces,
And all the foes that crossed his path
To earth are smitten bleeding corses.

Then fell the mighty on the plain
Like corn which hand of peasant reapeth;
Sir Axel, young and noble swain,
In all his woes a stout heart keepeth.

So long and well he him did guard
That piecemeal lay his armour scattered;
And still fought hard that stalwart lord
Until his beamy shield was shattered.

Still he defended himself full brave,
  Inspiring all with fear and wonder ;
Yes even 'till his trusty glaive
  At the gold hilt was snapped asunder.

With eighteen wounds, each dire to view,
  The noble breast of Axel smarted ;
To his tent bore him his friends so true,
  At his sad fortune broken-hearted.

Down ran his blood in reeking flood,
  He for the victory won has perished ;
The last, last word his lips proffer'd
  Devotes he to his maiden cherished.

" To Valborg bid a kind adieu,
  To Christ's high care I now bequeath her ;
We soon shall meet in yonder blue
  Were we in joy shall live together."

Enters the hall the little page,
  And takes his stand before the table ;
'Tis true he was of tender age,
  But well to ply his words was able.

"Doff the red silk and don the white,
Ye maids, I've news of sore disaster;
Hogen the prince is slain in fight,
And Axel, too, my gallant master.

"In fight Sir Hogen the King's son fell,
Upon the bier now lies his body;
My master him avenged full well,
But got thereby his death wound bloody.

"'Tis true we've won a victory,
But tempered is our exultation;
We have lost a host of peasantry
And all the best knights of our nation."

How fair Queen Malfred wept that tide
Each mother's heart can form a notion;
The fair Valborg in secret sigh'd,
And wrung her hands in wild emotion.

She calls her servitor in haste,
And him with tears is thus commanding:
"Now fetch ye down the gilded chest
From the high chamber where 'tis standing.

"And the grey horse to the chariot set,
Me to the cloister it shall carry;
Sir Axel's death I'll ne'er forget
So long as on the earth I tarry."

Before Maria's high church door
From out the chariot she alighted;
So sadly on the Church's floor
She stepped, her every joy was blighted.

She took the gold crown from her brow,
And gently that gold crown she laid on
A stone: "I'll have no husband now,"
She sighed, "but die a spotless maiden.

"I twice have been a plighted may,
But wedded bride I could be never:
From henceforth in this abbey grey
From the bleak world myself I'll sever."

Forward her chest adorned with gold
They brought, wherein her treasure's warded;
The treasure 'mongst her friends she dol'd,
Amongst those friends she most regarded.

First she took out a necklace fine,
Hung round with ornaments of splendor;
And that she gave to Eskeline,
The Dame who showed her love so tender.

The big arm-band and bracelet broad
Then taking from the gilded coffer,
On bold Sir Hagen she bestow'd,
To swear with her who made the offer.

A hundred golden rings so sheen,
With silver and with gold no little,
She gave the counts of handsome mien
Who swore the oath was her acquittal.

To church she gave, to cloister gave,
Her bounty priest and prelate booted;
And for the soul of Axel brave
She daily masses instituted.

She gave to orphans, and the clan
Who rove with hunger's pangs tormented;
Unto the image of Saint Ann
A red gold crown she has presented.

"Now Bishop with the earth so black
Do thou effect my consecration;
And when a nun let me not lack
Thy mild paternal consolation.

"Come Aage, dear Archbishop, come,
Do thou the Lord's devoted make me;
This blessed place shall be my home
Till out a lifeless corse they take me."

There were so many warriors bold
Whose hearts were all with sorrow laden,
When they saw cast the dingy mould
O'er Valborg's arm, the lovely maiden.

Now Valborg in that abbey grey
Doth go, its utmost strictness bearing;
From no mass will she keep away,
In every matin song she's sharing.

Of maids and dames there's every year
Full many a one to cloister given;
But none so fair as Valborg dear,
Whose equal lives not under heaven.

'Tis better ne'er to breathe the air
Than pine for ever on in sadness ;
Each day to eat one's bread with care,
And ne'er enjoy a moment's gladness.

To them repentance God impart,
By whose vile means are those divided,
Who have each other dear at heart,
And whose love is by honor guided.

London :
Printed for Thomas J. Wise, Hampstead, N.W.
Edition limited to Thirty Copies.

THE TALE OF BRYNILD

AND

KING VALDEMAR AND HIS SISTER

TWO BALLADS

BY

GEORGE BORROW

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THE TALE OF BRYNILD

SIVARD he a colt has got,
The swiftest 'neath the sun ;
Proud Brynild from the Hill of Glass
In open day he won.

Unto her did of knights and swains
The very flower ride ;
Not one of them the maid to win
Could climb the mountain's side.

The hill it was both steep and smooth ;
Upon its lofty head
Her sire had set her, knight nor swain
He swore with her should wed.

Soon to the Danish monarch's court
A messenger repaired,
To know if there was any one
To try the adventure dared.

'Twas talked about, and Sivard then
His purpose soon made known;
Said he: "I'll try upon my colt
To bring Brynilda down."

He rode away, the way was far,
The path was of the worst;
He saw the shining Glass Hill, where
The maid her durance curs'd.

And he away proud Brynild bore,
Nor deemed the adventure hard;
To bold Sir Nielus her he gave
To show him his regard.

Proud Brynild and proud Signelil
Those maids of beauteous mien,
Down to the river's side they went
Their silken robes to clean.

"Now do thou hear, thou proud Brynild,
What now I say to thee,
Where didst thou get the bright gold ring
I on thy finger see?"

"How did I get the bright gold ring
Which on my hand you see?
That gave me Sivard Snareswayne,
When he betrothed me."

"And though young Sivard gave thee that
When he his love declar'd,
He gives thee to Sir Nielus now
In proof of his regard."

No sooner than did Brynild hear,
The haughty hearted may,
Than to the chamber high she went,
Where sick of rage she lay.

It was the proud Brynild there
Fell sick, and moaning lay;
And her the proud Sir Nielus then
Attended every day.

"Now hark to me, thou Brynild fair,
My mind is ill at ease;
Know'st thou of any medicine
Can cure thy sad disease?

"If there be aught this world within
Can make thee cease to moan,
That thou shalt have, e'en if it cost
All, all the gold I own."

"I know of nought within this world
Can do my sickness good,
Except of Sivard Snareswayne
It be the hated blood.

"And there is nothing in this world
Which can assuage my pain,
Except of Sivard Snareswayne
The head I do obtain."

"To draw of Sivard Snareswayne
The blood I have no might;
His neck is hard as burnished steel,
No sword thereon will bite."

"O hark, Sir Nielus, hark to me,
My well beloved lord,
Borrow of him his Adelring,
His famous trusty sword.

"Tell him thou needest it so oft
When thou dost wage a fight,
But soon as 'tis within thy hand
Hew off his head outright."

It was the bold Sir Nielus then
His mantle puts he on ;
To Sivard, his companion true,
To the high hall he's gone.

"Now hear, O Sivard Snareswayne,
Thy sword unto me lend,
For I unto the field of fight
Full soon my course must bend."

"My trusty faulchion Adelring
I'll freely lend to thee ;
No man be sure shall thee o'ercome,
However strong he be.

"My trusty faulchion Adelring
To thee I'll freely yield,
But, oh! beware thee of the tears
Beneath the hilt conceal'd.

"Beware thee of those frightful tears,
They all are bloody red;
If down thy fingers they should run
Thou wert that moment dead."

Upstood the bold Sir Nielus then,
Drew out the sword amain;
One blow and off the head is hewn
Of Sivard Snareswayne.

Beneath his mantle then he takes
The head, distilling blood,
And hurrying to the chamber high
Before Brynilda stood.

"Behold the head, the bloody head,
Thou didst so crave to gain;
For thee I've done a felon deed
Which gives my heart such pain."

"O lay aside the bloody head,
It fills my heart with fright;
And come to me, my dearest lord,
Beneath the linen white."

"I crave thee, woman, not to think
I came for sport and play;
Thou wast the wicked cause that I
From honour went astray."

It was the bold Sir Nielus then
His faulchion he drew out;
It was the beauteous Brynild whom
He all to pieces smote.

"Now have I slain my comrade dear,
And eke my lovely may,
Yet still I am resolved in mind
A third, a third to slay."

So then against the hard stone floor
He placed the trusty glaive;
To his heart's root the point in went,
And him his death wound gave.

'Twere better that this maid had died
Within her mother's womb,
Than that these princely men through her
To such an end should come.

Now will I rede, each honest man
Well to deliberate ever;
Unequalled woman's cunning is,
Though guiles of men be clever.

She laughs when 'tis her wish to laugh,
And weeps when she will weep;
Whene'er she wants thy heart to move
Fair words on thee she'll heap.

Be she sick, or be she well,
In woman ne'er confide;
In murder red, by woman led,
His hands Sir Nielus dyed.

KING VALDEMAR AND HIS SISTER

See, see, with Queen Sophy sits Valdemar bold.
About little Kirsten much parlance they hold.

"Now hark, my good Lord! I have this to propose,
That thou shalt give Kirsten to Buris for spouse.

A sister thou hast, I a brave brother own,
A wedding we'll have ere this good year be flown."

"It never shall happen, as long as I live,
That I to a horse-thief my sister will give.

My sister's a princess so fair and so bright,
But Buris is liker a groom than a knight."

Then pale as a corpse grew Sophia to see ;
" My noble lord, wherefore despisest thou me? "

The Queen struck with fury her hand on the board :
" Be sure that I vengeance will have for that word."

King Valdemar now to the war-field should wend,
Behind stays Sir Buris the land to defend.

Forth, forth from the land the bold King his course bent,
So many a beautiful knight with him went.

Him followed so many a chivalrous band ;
He disposed of his sister, the fair mirror's hand.

To a prince rich and fine and of valour approved,
He gave little Kirsten, his sister beloved.

With Buris Sophia sits over the board,
And much brooded she on King Valdemar's word.

"Sir Buris, my brother, list thou to my say:
Beguile the King's sister whilst he is away."

Sir Buris he cast on his sister his eyes:
"O why my dear sister dost talk in this guise?

To do such an act I will never consent,
To make her my wife is my wish and intent."

The Queen with her hand struck the table with force:
"Just, just as I bid thee direct thou thy course."

His mantle of azure Sir Buris puts on,
And unto the princess Sir Buris is gone.

With prayers late and early the maiden he tired,
But could not obtain from her what he desired.

"Sir Buris, why seekest thou me to betray?
To my brother for this thou must answer some day."

With ghastly white cheek did Sir Buris depart,
The maiden he loved from the depths of his heart.

Sir Buris flung on him his scarlet array,
And unto Sophia with speed took his way :

" The princess so firm and determined I find,
No knight in this world can e'er conquer her mind."

" A pretty man, thou, to take love-work in hand,
If the powerful Runes thou dost not understand."

" To the paths of fidelity I will return,
No wish do I feel your Rune-magic to learn.

King Valdemar left his domain to my care,
Shall I in return his dear sister ensnare ? "

" O I will for thee the Rune-characters trace,
And thou them shalt cast in convenient place."

"Sir Buris has cast the Rune-letters, alas,
On the bridge over which little Kirsten should pass.

Little Kirsten with anguish was filled, and with care,
Must spite of herself to Sir Buris repair.

She knocked with her hand on the thick oaken door:
"Sir Buris, arise, let me into thy bower."

Upstood then Sir Buris, in scarlet array'd,
And straight he admitted the beautiful maid.

The whole night she lay in Sir Buris' embrace,
All to her own sorrow and daily distress.

Now on towards summer and autumn it drew,
So stout in the waist little Kirsten she grew.

Her true waiting maid little Kirsten address'd:
"To the chamber of stone now convey me in haste.

And there unto me do thou bring the mid-wife
But let not the Queen know thereof for thy life."

To her little foot-swain little Kirsten did say:
"Fetch hither Sir Buris, withouten delay."

They met on the lofty hall's high balcony,
Together discoursed they so sorrowfully.

They gave then each other a tender caress,
And swooned to the earth from of grief the excess.

The year has revolved, and home now from the fray,
King Valdemar cometh triumphant and gay.

In, in through the portal King Valdemar strode,
Sophia received him in complaisant mode.

About and around him King Valdemar stared:
"Say! where is my sister, and how has she fared?"

Then sly 'neath her scarlet laughed Sophy the Queen :
" It is full three months now since thy sister I've seen."

Sophia exclaim'd : " She is not to be taught,
My advice and monition she holdeth at naught."

" O why dost thou thus of my sister complain ?
In honour she liv'd without ever a stain."

" The chamber of stone she has long made her home,
There she of a little child light has become."

Then the heart of the monarch was smitten with grief :
" To thy words, O Sophia, I yield no belief."

" The blessed Lord's truth and no lie have I told,
She invited me e'en her child-birth to behold."

To five of his good knights spake sternly the King :

"Depart, and my sister straight home to me
bring."

The knights rode away as King Valdemar said,
Much rather, much rather, would they have been
dead.

They struck on the door 'neath their mantle of
skin:
"Sweet princess Kirstina, arise, let us in."

To the chamber straight came the true serving
lass:
"We crave thy leave into the chamber to pass."

"O sirs, ye may enter as free as the morn,
For nobody here any baby has borne."

Then in sorrowful mood good Sir Peter replied:
"God grant that thy words I may see verified."

"Arise, little Kirsten, thyself quick array,
For thou to thy brother this night must away.

"Array thyself quick, for in hurry we are,
Thy brother the King has returned from the war."

"Alack, I dare venture my gold coronet,
That I shall my death by this night-journey get.

"My daughter now take, and in linen enfold,
The face of her mother no more she'll behold.

"Assist ye my daughter to Christentie's breast,
I fear that her luck will not be of the best.

"Let the name that ye give her be proud Ingerlill,
My fortune intends for me nothing but ill."

Little Kirsten her faithful maid servant address'd:
"Now fetch to me hither, I pray, my gilt chest."

The chest she unlocked where lay stored all her gear,
And distributed that midst her servants so dear.

And most to her maid she thought fit to award,
For she was to be her child's teacher and guard.

The gold, the red gold, she has given her so free,
That tender and kind to her child she might be.

"Every lady can well imagine how fit
At present I am on my courser to sit.

"And each man, I am sure, can imagine how ill
A journey nocturnal agree with me will."

On the saddle they placed her, with hearts full of care,
Glittered like the spun gold her beautiful hair.

And when they arrived at the lofty castelle,
Down, down from her horse little Kirstenlill fell.

At the window the Queen stood and laughed with delight:
"Come hither and view of your sister the plight."

To lift her from the ground little Knud was not slow:
"In the name of Lord Jesus the whole truth avow."

They helped her the stairs of the hall to ascend:
"Now thee to the powerful Christ we commend."

In the doorway she crossed herself thrice on the
breast:
"To Christ I commend me, the mighty and
blest."

Then in through the door little Kirsten she
wends,
And his white hand to her the bold monarch
tends.

Then unto her brother she gives her fair hand:
"I joy much to see thee returned to the land."

Much favour and friendship to her he display'd
And that Queen Sophia so furious made.

The king to the brim filled a beaker with wine:
"I beg of thee drink to me, dear sister mine!"

"Now hear, little Kirsten, what I to thee say,
Thou shalt sing before me some pretty love-lay."

"I never in all my life learnt a love-lay,
But I'll sing another as well as I may."

"O thou with thy dancing, and eke with thy voice,
The hearts of my guests shalt this evening rejoice."

To sing then a song little Kirsten began,
To the tune danced so many a bold knightly man.

The King himself sprang 'mid the dancers' gay band,
And his sister he took by the lilly-fair hand.

He out and in with her eagerly danced,
But nothing amiss in her movements he glanced.

So often the King proved the voice of the maid,
And still to her gait more attention he paid.

And the King measured her by the girdle with care,
But still he of nothing amiss was aware.

"O Sophia, may thee shame and evil betide,
My dear little Kirsten thou'st foully belied."

"It is the Lord's truth that I've told, and no lie,
She has brought forth a daughter in secrecy."

The Queen has yet worse little Kirsten distrest,
Her two lovely breasts she tore out from her vest.

And, craving her ruin, with hand resolute
She pressed out the milk before Valdemar's foot.

She pressed out the milk 'fore the King on the floor:
"My King and my husband, canst doubt any more?"

Then black as the earth grew King Valdemar's face,
And Kirstenlil swooned 'neath the load of disgrace.

"I intended to wed thee but full speedily,
Now thou shalt this evening with agony die.

"To a mighty lord I'd resolv'd thee to espouse,
Now this very night thy young life thou shalt lose.

" The death the most cruel and painful of all,
This night thou shalt suffer in this very hall."

Little Kirsten she fell 'fore the King on her knee :
" Dear brother ! I pray shew some pity to me."

" Thy kneeling, O Kirsten, will profit thee nought,
The basest and vilest of sins thou hast wrought.

'Tis folly to hope I shall mercy display,
Thou injured me hast in such infamous way.

I promised thy hand, for of this nought I knew,
To the son of a king 'cross the Haf's water blue."

He turned to the foot-swain who stood at his side :
" Fetch hither five horse-whips," King Valdemar cried.

Little Kirsten she fell down upon her bare knee :
" Now mighty Lord God ! look with mercy on me."

"For four whips or five whips thou needest not send,
One will be quite enough to bring me to my end."

The King in his hand the horse-scourges has ta'en,
His bosom with sorrow was filled, and with pain.

"Rise, rise Queen Sophia! and beg for me now,
For brought me to this have thy brother and thou."

"Little worthy were I of the title of Queen,
Were I to essay such a harlot to screen."

"I'll punish her so, though I love her full dear,
That all shall thereof with astonishment hear."

He lashed her so long, and he lashed her so sore,
That grovelling she lay in a stream of red gore.

She crept for defence 'neath Sophia's array,
With her foot she with vehemence spurned her away.

"O 'neath your red scarlet my poor body hide,
For the sake of the Christ who for us sinners died.

I let fall so many a big briny tear,
God's mercy upon me! my fate has been drear.

O brother, O brother, your cruel hand stay,
For a moment, that soul-gifts distribute I may.

I give to thyself all my castles so grand,
Because that my life thou dost hold in thy hand.

To my daughter so dear my red gold I bequeath,
For she shall cause vengeance be ta'en for my death.

I give to Queen Sophy my silver-cased knife,
Because she it was who betrayed my young life.

O Buris! God give thee misery smart,
Enveloped with care the most black is my heart.

And now I've my testament made to my mind,
Dear brother, prove towards me forgiving and kind.

I to Christ give my soul, may he shew it good
grace,
There's no one, I trow, cares for me in this place."

She bade all good night that around her she
spied.
And all for the damsel so piteously cried.

For her wept every dame, for her wept every maid,
All wept save Sophia, that vile wicked jade.

Then yielded the roselet her innocent sprite,
To God she commended it as it took flight.

O then was King Vald'mar with sorrow opprest,
And wildly his heart 'gan to knock in his breast.

"What a hard hearted wretch thou, O Sophy,
must be,
That thou her distress without pity could see.

Shame upon thee, thou basest of all womankind,
Thou now hast obtained the great wish of thy
mind.

Alack! well a day, my dear sister is dead;
Now where shall we bury the rose-flower red?"

"In Riber street, Sir, let thy flower repose,
That o'er her may tread every day my horse-shoes."

"O never shalt thou have the joy, that thy horse
Shall tread o'er the ground which concealth her corse.

To Vestervig's cloister her corse shall be sent,
O'er her shall be placed a red brick monument."

He caused her be buried with grandeur and state,
All the days of his life the King sighed for her fate.

"Now I will retire to a chamber of gloom,
A chamber which fire nor light shall illume.

There ne'er shall the blest sun on me cast its ray,
Till I've through repentance my sins wiped away."

To his page the King spake with so serious an air:
"Command thou Sir Buris to me to repair.

"Hark, hark thou, Sir Knight, what I now say to thee,
How hast thou been found in thy duty to me?

I left thee a vine-yard for thee to watch o'er,
Therein hast thou done me an injury sore.

The loveliest vine in the vineyard that stood,
That hast thou destroyed to thy own little good."

Sir Buris he fell on his knee 'fore the King:
"My dear lord and master, O pardon this thing."

"No, thou too shalt suffer both torment and shame,
To a sharp shameful death through thy treachery she came."

"The cruellest death ye for me can invent,
To thou for the beautiful maid I'm content."

"Let the eyes of the horse-thief be torn from his head,
Because he the beautiful damsel betray'd."

They've torn from the sockets Sir Buris's eyes,
In spite of Queen Sophy's entreaties and cries.

Sir Buris' right hand, and Sir Buris' left foot,
King Valdemar caused to be hewn off to boot.

From the Castle the knight they led forth on the green,
In mockery and scoff of Sophia the Queen.

"Behold now thy brother, that lord great and fine,
Who fain as a prince and a monarch would shine!"

The Dane-king a fetter has caused to be made,
On Buris in Vestervig cloister 'twas laid.

For eleven long years there was Sir Buris confin'd,
Each day to her grave went the knight lame and blind.

Each day that he lived of the King did he crave
That beside her when dead they might lay him
in grave.

To the King he was forced to give land and
domain,
Ere to rest in the cloister the boon he could gain.

He expired just as the twelfth year was begun—
The King never smiled Queen Sophia upon.

MIRROR OF CINTRA

Translated from the original Portuguese on a marble slab in the garden of Don Juan De Castro, at Cintra.

TINY fields in charming order,
Which the jagged forests border ;
Sheltered valleys downward wending,
'Midst the rocks to heaven ascending ;
Silvery fountains turbid never,
Foliage dense which bloometh ever ;
Ceaseless Zephyrs gently playing,
Satyrs, fawns by thousands straying ;
Nymphs, with fair bewitching faces,
Form of Cintra's clime the graces.

1840.

THE HARP

From Garonwy Owen

THE harp to every one is dear
  Who hateth vice, and all things evil ;
Hail to its gentle voice so clear,
  Its gentle voice affrights the Devil !

The Devil can not the Minstrel quell—
  He by the Minstrel is confounded ;
From Saul was cast the spirit fell,
  When David's harp melodious sounded.

LONDON:
Printed for THOMAS J. WISE, Hampstead, N.W.
Edition limited to Thirty Copies.

THE DALBY BEAR

AND OTHER BALLADS

BY

GEORGE BORROW

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THE DALBY BEAR

THERE goes a bear on Dalby moors,
Oxen and horses he devours.

The peasants are in deep distress
The laidly bear should them oppress.

Their heads together at length they lay,
How they the bear might seize and slay.

They drove their porkers through the wood,
The bear turn'd round as he lay at food.

Outspoke as best he could the bear:
"What kind of guests approach my lair?"

Uprose the bear amain from his food,
A christian man before him stood.

A little hour together they fought,
The bear to the earth the man has brought.

Fast came a knight as he could make,
He heard the heart of the peasant break.

The bear upon him fiercely glar'd ;
"Thou needst not hurry, I'm prepar'd."

"And thou by me shalt be stoutly met,
So thou may'st vapour and thou may'st threat.

"If thou hast spear and nimble hand,
I've claws and teeth at my command."

They fought for a day, they fought for two,
And so on the third they continu'd to do.

But when to night the fourth day drew,
The bear to the earth the warrior threw.

"Thou wilt no victory gain from me,
Thou haughty knight, thou may'st certain be.

"I late was the son of a powerful King,
A Queen me into the world did bring.

"My Step-dame chang'd me, as you see,
She'd ruin me to eternity.

"About the wild forest I have run,
To the boors much scathe and violence done.

"In winter and in summer's tide
In peace for me they could not bide.

"But they may thank my cruel Dame,
For 'twas through her I a bear became.

"She plac'd around my neck so tight
An iron band in wrath and spite.

"If thou this accursed band canst break
Thy life from thee I will not take."

"O I will help thee from thy thrall;
Maria's son who has power for all

"Will loosen from thee this stubborn band,
Full able thereto is his right hand."

O'er him the cross the knight did make,
The iron burst from the bruin's neck.

He became a youth as fair as day,
His father's realm he went to sway.

A noble maid awaits the knight,
The hand of the Monarch's sister bright.

They liv'd together in honor and joy,
To the cruel Stepdame's great annoy.

A hard flint rock she soon became,
For herself she earn'd both woe and shame.

TYGGE HERMANDSEN

Down o'er the isle in torrents fell
On a Thursday morn the rain;
To fetch his bride now forth shall ride
Sir Tygge Hermandsen.

Sir Tygge out of the window look'd,
The brooks ran boisterously:
"To ride out now would bring me woe,
So dear no bride I'll buy.

"But hear thou, Nilaus Benditson,
Long shanks has thy good steed;
I beg for the love of the God above
You'll fetch my bride with speed."

Then answer'd Nilaus Benditson,
In his sleeve thus answer'd he:
"If me thou dispatch thy bride to fetch
I'll trick thee certainly."

It was Nilaus Benditson,
He rode the bride to meet;
There hung silk sheen and sendal green
Before his courser's feet.

They clad themselves in silken cloth,
And in cloth of gold beside;
In long array to the Kirk their way
They took with the youthful bride.

The bride before the holy Kirk door
Like a blooming rose did stand;
Oft did she turn to the water, to learn
If the bridegroom was at hand.

Then answer'd Nilaus Benditson,
He stood by the bride so close:
"The brooks so roar'd that to cross the ford
He fear'd would wet his hose."

They plac'd the bride on the bridal bench
With pomp and honor high ;
Oft would they turn to the water to learn
If the bridegroom bold drew nigh.

In the silver cup they skink the ale,
And the nut-brown mead they pour ;
Thus things they sped till day was fled,
And until of bed the hour.

They lifted up the youthful bride,
In the bride-bed her they set ;
And there sat she for hours three,
There came no bridegroom yet.

The priests before the bride-bed stood,
And sang with all their might :
" Who in the bed in the bridegroom's stead
Shall sleep with the bride tonight ? "

Then forth stepp'd Nilaus Benditson,
His lac'd shœ off flung he :
" With the bride so bright I'll sleep tonight,
And give her my troth with glee."

So they the bridal solemnized,
And glad themselves they made;
At home was then Tygge Hermandsen,
To cross the brooks afraid.

It chanc'd upon a Wednesday,
The waters began to fall;
Across came then Tygge Hermandsen
With his gay bridesmen all.

And he came to the bridal house
Where the feast was spread in state,
Then up and cried the youthful bride:
"Ride back, you come too late."

"Now hear, thou beauteous Sidselil,
I've this to complain of thee,
That thou hast ta'en another swain
And broke thy troth with me."

"Now hear, thou Tygge Hermandsen,
Thou might'st have been aware,
I would disdain to wed the swain
To wet his feet had fear.

If thou hadst been a Lady's swain,
And hadst thou lov'd me true,
With thy sword's stroke thou wouldst have broke
Thy way through the billows blue."

"To the cloyster I'll myself betake,
And the monkish vow I'll swear;
For good or ill, proud Sidselil,
I'll never more come here."

"But if hereby thy way shall lie
When the brooks shall calmly run,
If cheeses two in my store I view
In thy sack I'll drop thee one."[1]

[1] She taunts him with the idea of his becoming a monk, and going about with a sack begging for alms.

THE WICKED STEPMOTHER

Sir Ove he has no daughter but one,
All underneath a green hill's side,
He bestow'd her the Lord of Elling upon.
In such peril through the forest they ride.

He bestow'd her upon a gallant knight,
All underneath a green hill's side,
Sir Stig Cob was the gallant hight.
In such peril through the forest they ride.

When a year to end had well nigh come,
All underneath a green hill's side.
Two sons had Thorelil in her womb.
In such peril through the forest they ride.

Hither and thither they carry the dame,
All underneath a green hill's side,
But worse and worse her plight became.
In such peril through the forest they ride.

Sir Stig his bonnet he has put on,
All underneath a green hill's side,
And into the hall to his mother is gone.
In such peril through the forest they ride.

"Hear me, dear mother, canst thou rede,
All underneath a green hill's side,
How it with Thorelil shall speed?"
In such peril through the forest they ride.

"For forty weeks and a year I trow,
All underneath a green hill's side,
Thy Thorelil with child shall go."
In such peril through the forest they ride.

"O mother dear, it can scarce be so,
All underneath a green hill's side,
But forty weeks Mary with Christ did go."
In such peril through the forest they ride.

" Since I no help can here obtain,
All underneath a green hill's side,
From whence I came convey me again."
In such peril through the forest they ride.

" The horses are grazing upon the moor,
All underneath a green hill's side,
And in their beds the coachmen snore."
In such peril through the forest they ride.

" If coach nor coachmen I can get,
All underneath the green hill's side,
I'll tramp on my feet through dry and wet."
In such peril through the forest they ride.

Her lips the word had scarcely said,
All underneath a green hill's side,
When the horses to the coach were led.
In such peril through the forest they ride.

Stig took her so tenderly by the waist,
All underneath a green hill's side.
And her in the gilded coach he plac'd.
In such peril through the forest they ride.

He set her down on the cushions gray,
All underneath a green hill's side,
And he himself drove the coach away.
In such peril through the forest they ride.

And when they came under the green wood bough,
All underneath a green hill's side,
Her chariot broke her weight below.
In such peril through the forest they ride.

"A wondrous woman I sure must be,
All underneath a green hill's side,
Since my own coach won't carry me."
In such peril through the forest they ride.

"My dearest, my dearest, be not dismay'd,
All underneath a green hill's side,
Thou back canst walk with thy husband's aid."
In such peril through the forest they ride.

And when to the castle gate they won,
All underneath a green hill's side,
His sister stood and lean'd thereon.
In such peril through the forest they ride.

"O my dear sister, canst thou rede,
All underneath a green hill's side,
How it with Thorelil will speed?"
In such peril through the forest they ride.

Unto her coffer proud Mettelil flew,
All underneath a green hill's side,
Of wax she has fashion'd babies two.
In such peril through the forest they ride.

She drew her blue mantle o'er her head,
All underneath a green hill's side,
And unto her mother's bower she sped.
In such peril through the forest they ride.

"From thy heart, dear mother, all sorrow chase,
All underneath a green hill's side,
And thy grand-babes take to thy embrace."
In such peril through the forest they ride.

"O I had thought with my bunch of keys,
All underneath a green hill's side,
To overturn her bliss with ease.
In such peril through the forest they ride.

'I thought I'd bewitch'd each inch of land,'
All underneath a green hill's side,
Save the spot alone where her chest doth stand."
In such peril through the forest they ride.

No sooner was Thorelil thither convey'd,
All underneath a green hill's side,
Than of two fair sons she light was made.
In such peril through the forest they ride.

"O God grant me so long to breathe,
All underneath a green hill's side,
That parting presents I may bequeath.
In such peril through the forest they ride.

"Stig's mother, I give her my sarke to wear,
All underneath a green hill's side,
May she use it like me with grief and care!
In such peril through the forest they ride.

"To his sister I give my embroider'd shoe,
All underneath a green hill's side,
To wear with glee unmixt with woe.
In such peril through the forest they ride.

"A lovely rose is my last bequest,
All underneath a green hill's side,
For Stig to wed, and with her be blest."
In such peril through the forest they ride.

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Printed for THOMAS J. WISE, Hampstead, N W.
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THE

MERMAID'S PROPHECY

AND OTHER

SONGS RELATING TO QUEEN DAGMAR

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SONGS RELATING TO QUEEN DAGMAR

I.

KING VALDEMAR'S WOOING.

Valdemar King and Sir Strange bold
  At table sat one day,
So many a word 'twixt them there passed
  In amicable way.

"Hear Strange, hear! thou for a time
  Thy native land must leave;
Thou shalt away to Bohemia far
  My young bride to receive."

Then answered Strange Ebbesen,
  To answer he was not slow:
"Who shall attend me of thy liegemen,
  If I to Bohemia go?"

"Do thou take with thee young Lord Limbek,
Nor leave Olaf Lukke behind;
Take rich Peter Glob, and whomsoe'er
Shall best please thine own mind.

"Take Sealand's Bishop, none more learned
There dwelleth North nor South,
And take Sir Albert of Eskilsea,
There's eloquence in his mouth."

It was the young Sir Strange bold,
He down to the sea shore wends,
And him King Valdemar himself
With nobles many attends.

And they sailed over the briny wave,
They sailed for sennights three,
The nearest way to Bohemia's bounds,
They were at heart so free.

They furled their sail, and their anchor dropped,
To the land they eagerly sped;
So fair a band of knights they were,
Sir Strange at their head.

When a little up the land they'd won
They dispatched their messenger,
Should tell to Bohemia's prince that they
The Dane-king's envoys were.

And to speak with him in secrecy
On a matter of weight they sought ;
Then silk upon the earth was spread,
And before the King they were brought.

" Hail to thee, King of Bohemian Land,
Thou sittest a prince in state ;
To you sends Valdemar, Denmark's King,
With your daughter he would mate."

" Take napkins, Sirs, and water take,
Sit down at our table board ;
We bid ye welcome to our land,
Fit answer we'll award."

To the bower high the monarch sped,
His Queen's advice to take :
" Nobles are here from Denmark come,
And suit for our daughter make."

"If Valdemar, King of Denmark's land,
For our dear daughter woo,
We'll give her to the powerful man,
And precious dowry too."

They decked her with the ruddy gold,
And her to the hall convey'd;
Sir Strange the knight, so fair and fine,
A low obeisance made.

They clad her in the silken vest,
And her to the hall conveyed:
"Here mayst thou see the princess self
In her graces all arrayed."

Then they bore in the playing board,
Was wroughten all of gold;
Sir Strange should with the princess play,
And private converse hold.

The third game they together played
Upon that red gold board,
Sir Strange won the noble maid
For Valdemar his lord.

So deep 'twas getting in the night,
From tables they should rise,
Sir Strange must the princess bed,
Sir Strange bold and wise.

Then they the Damsel attend to bed
To the valiant cavalier,
Sir Strange with respectful grace
Arose when she drew near.

"Now on your honour and knightly truth,
Sir Strange tell to me:
Whether the King of your Danish land
Be handsome or not to see?"

Then answer made Sir Strange good,
Looked up to the star-lit sky:
"By the Saints above, the King of our love
Is handsomer twice than I."

They spread the silk upon the earth,
And the princess led to the strand,
To her parents dear, she bade good-night,
And away they bore from land.

It was the good Bohemian King
To advising his daughter fell:
"Think, think my child, on honor and fame
When thou in Denmark dwell.

"Pious and virtuous, kind and good,
To prove thyself essay
To thy subjects all, for thus wilt thou
Become their hope and stay."

The nobles steered their ship from the land,
No cares their hearts oppress,
And they the land of Denmark made
In two months tide and less.

It was the beauteous Dagmar Queen
Before Mando neared the land,
And lo! the bold King of Denmark rode
His courser on the sand.

"Tell me, Sir Strange Ebbesen,
Ere we come nearer land,
What squinting fellow 'tis who rides
So brisk on the yellow sand?"

"Be welcome, beauteous Dagmar Queen,
Speak thereabout no word;
For know 'tis Valdemar of Denmark,
Of kingdoms three the lord.

'My gracious liege, lady Dagmar fair,
Of princes he's the flower,
He castles has, and fortresses,
Three kingdoms own his power."

"Shame, shame befall thee, Strange dog,
How loudly thou canst lie;
Methinks your boasted Danish King
Has only got one eye."

"My lovely Dame, a warrior he,
And the best beneath the sun;
He back to Denmark all the land
Benorth Ebb's stream has won.

"A man is he, and a prince full wise,
In the face dares look his foes;
They fly before him both East and West,
When he with fury glows.

"Who others life and land will risk
And prove war's pastime fell,
If a prince of blood and courageous mood
Will risk himself as well?

"And do thou hear, my lovely maid,
Be cheerful and content,
For ne'er so long as thou shalt live
This step thou shalt repent.

"And all the time that thou shalt live
Your servant I will be,
And Denmark's gallant nobles all
Shall bow to thee their knee."

So they their bridal solemnized
Beneath a lucky star;
So heartily one another loved
Soon Valdemar and Dagmar.

There was rejoicing with great and small,
With rich men and with poor,
But boors and burgers most of all
Rejoiced from their heart's core.

She came not to burden, she came in peace,
To ease the good boor she came;
If Denmark aye such flowers had
She dearly would prize the same!

The love of every Danish heart
The good Queen Dagmar gained;
Such happy pleasant days there were
Whilst she alive remained.

II.

QUEEN DAGMAR'S ARRIVAL IN DENMARK.

It was Bohemia's Queen began
Her daughter to direct:
"They'll show thee, when thou to Denmark come,
Much honor and respect.

"And when respect and honor thou win
In Denmark's land of fame,
Let not the boors be with tax opprest,
Thus will they bless thy name.

"Be the first boon thou of thy lord dost crave,
Of thy lord so fair and kind,
That he release Bishop Valdemar,
His uncle, who sits confin'd."

And there was silk and scarlet cloth
  Upon the earth outspread ;
'Twas Dagmar, the youthful princess fair,
  To the strand that down was led.

They hoisted up their silken sails
  On the gilded yard so high,
And they in less than two months space
  Old Denmark could descry.

Before Mando they anchor cast,
  They cast it on the white sand ;
They took the princess Dagmar fair
  And bore her first to land.

They took the youthful Dagmar fair
  And bore her first to land ;
'Twas Valdemar King of Denmark old
  That stretched to her his hand.

Then there was silk, and scarlet cloth,
  So wide on the earth outspread ;
On Dagmar wait both Dames and maids,
  To Ribe house she was led.

So early in the morning tide
Ere the sun illumed the lift,
'Twas young and beauteous Dagmar Queen
That craved her morning gift.

"The first, first boon that I crave of thee,
My heart's beloved lord,
Let Bishop Valdemar leave his tower
And be to his friends restor'd.

"The second boon I most earnestly crave,
Nor must thou that refuse,
Take off from each plough the tax that's on,
And from prison the captives loose."

"Desist, desist from thy first prayer,
Desist, my Dagmar dear,
If Valdemar Bishop come but out,
He'll widow thee in a year."

She took the gold crown off her brow,
On the table that she set:
"O what shall I do in Denmark, now
My request denial has met?"

"Straight fetch to me hither Sir Strange knight,
And Younker Canute to me call,
They shall away to Oringsdorg
And the prisoners free from thrall."

And when from the tower forth he came
Nor walk nor stand he mought:
"Therein for full twelve years I sat,
So long the time I thought."

A golden comb his sister took,
And combed his yellow hair;
For every lock of his she smoothed
She shed a briny tear.

"And do thou hear, dear sister mine,
Ne'er sorrow for my sake;
If I one single year survive
I'll well my wrongs ywrake."

"O hush, Bishop Valdemar! nor let
Thy fury o'er thee reign;
Comst thou once more into Seaborough tower,
We ne'er shall meet again."

But the Bishop could not stifle his wrath,
So the land he was forced to quit;
It grieved Queen Dagmar to the heart,
That he showed so little wit.

There was great joy over all Denmark
That Dagmar for Queen they had got;
Lived burger and boor in peace without
The plague of plough-tax and scot.

Christ bless the youthful Athelings two,
And lengthen their vital span,
That justice they may, and equity,
Do long in sight of man!

III.

THE MERMAID'S PROPHECY.

The King he has caught the fair mermaid, and deep
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
In the dungeon has placed her, to pine and to weep,
Because his will she had not done.

The Queen of the Danes addressed two of her band:
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
"To come to my presence the mermaid command,
For my will by her it shall be done."

The mermaid came in, to the Queen she up went:

(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)

"What wilt thou, O Queen, that for me thou hast sent?

By me thy will can never be done."

The Queen the blue cushion stroked down with a smile:

(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)

"Sit down pretty mermaid and rest thee awhile,

My will by thee must now be done."

"Why seek'st thou, O Queen, to betray my young life?

(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)

For under that cushion is stuck a sharp knife,

By me thy will can never be done."

"If thou knowest that, then much more thou dost know,

(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)

So do thou my destiny unto me show,

And thus by thee shall my will be done."

"If I should thy destiny to thee announce,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
On a fire of faggots thoud'st burn me at once!
By me unwilling your will is done.

"Three babes thou shalt bear, each a beautiful boy,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
And in leaving thy womb they thy life shall destroy,
And thus fair Queen thy will is done."

"If with me, luckless me, it no better shall speed,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
Inform me what fortune for them is decreed,
For thus by thee can my will be done."

"The first shall be King in old Denmark of them,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
The next shall succeed to the gold diadem,
By me can thus thy will be done.

"The third as the wisest of mortals shall shine,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
And for him thou art doomed thy young life to resign,
Thus all your will, fair Queen, I've done."

In her mantle of azure the Queen wrapt her head,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
And unto the hall to the Monarch she sped,
For she her will had fairly done.

"Now hear my entreaty, my heart's belov'd Lord,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
To my own disposal this mermaid award,
For she my will has fairly done."

"I'll not give her thee, nor her life shalt thou save,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
For my seven brave vessels she swamped in the wave,
My pleasure thus she has not done."

Black, black as a clod grew the Queen at that
word,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
And down she fell senseless before the King's
board,
Because her will she had fairly done.

"My Queen and my dearest! thy heart shall
not break,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
Thou art free to the strand the fair mermaid to take,
Because thy will she has fairly done."

The mermaid in scarlet so fine she array'd,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
Although she had heard her own death by her
spaed,
For thus, for thus, her will she'd done.

The Queen gave command to the maids in her
train:
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
"Convey ye the mermaid hence down to the main,
For she my will has fairly done."

Upon the blue billows the mermaid they place,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
The Queen fell to weeping, and sad was each face,
For she her will, alack! had done.

"O prythee don't weep, and O prythee don't grieve,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
Heaven's portals stand open thy soul to receive,
Now I thy will have fairly done.

"In the mansions of Heaven thou aye shalt remain,
(*The mermaid dances the floor upon*)
And there perfect quiet and rest thou shalt gain—
Now all thy will, fair Queen, I've done!"

ROSMER.

Buckshank bold, and Elfinstone,
And more than I can mention here.
They caused to be built so stout a ship,
And unto Iceland they will steer.

They launched the ship upon the sea,
Which bellowed like a wrathful bear;
Down to the bottom the vessel sank,
A laidly Trold has dragged it there.

Sank to the bottom the young Roland,
And round about he groped awhile.
Until he found the path which led
Unto the bower of Ellenlile.

Young Roland towards the mountain goes,
He saw the little sparkles fly:
"Betide whate'er the Lord God will
I here will house me verily."

Young Roland into the mountain went,
Benumbed with cold his limbs they shook:
"What dost thou here, thou wretched man,
On whom the Lord with pity look?"

Then up and spoke Dame Ellenlile:
"Young swain why hither hast thou come?
What message hast thou brought to me?
Thou'dst better far have staid at home.

"Now hie thee to the chamber in,
So frozen and so wet withal;
But cometh Rosmer Giant home
He'll tear thee into pieces small.

"Now sit thee down, thou wretched lad,
And at the fire thy body cheer;
If Rosmer Giant come striding in
He'll stick thee on this spit, I fear."

Then home came Rosmer Shank-stretcher,
And thus in anger he began:
"Full certainly there's hither come
Some Christian woman, child, or man."

Then forward stepped she, Ellenlile,
And swore so high and solemnly:
"A crow which bore a dead man's leg
E'en now across the house did fly.

"A crow which bore a dead man's leg
Just now across our house did fly;
He cast it in, I cast it out,
And that I trow full speedily."

But Rosmer shrieked and sprang about:
"Some Christian wight thon dost conceal,
And I will spit and burn thee, Dame,
Unless the truth thou dost reveal."

Then Ellenlile her mantle donned,
And went and stood by Rosmer's knee:
"O here's a swain from Iceland come,
And he's of nearest kin to me."

"If there's a swain from Iceland come,
And if he be thy kinsman near,
Then I to him will safety pledge,
No harm from me he need to fear."

When he two years in the sea had been,
Young Roland he would fain be gone;
For Ellenlile was now with child,
A deed of folly had been done.

When that perceived proud Ellenlile,
Near Rosmer King she took her stand:
"Now wilt thou give the stranger lad
Leave to return to his own land?"

"And if the swain for home doth long,
Then I will take him to the shore;
And I will give him silver and gold,
And in a coffer it will store.

And so he took the ruddy gold,
And in a coffer it he laid;
Unknown to him proud Ellenlile
So sly therein herself convey'd.

He takes the man beneath his arm,
The coffer on his back he throws ;
Then away, away beneath the salt spray
Striding the Giant Rosmer goes.

" Now have I brought thee to the land,
And moon and sun thou canst behold ;
And now to use as thou shalt chuse
I give this coffer filled with gold."

" I thank thee, Rosmer, honest man,
Thou'st brought me out of the ocean wild ;
And now I'll tell thee a piece of news,
The proud Dame Ellen is with child."

Then ran the tears down Rosmer's cheeks,
As falls the dew on hill and plain :
" If thou hadst not my troth and oath
Here as thou standest thee I'd brain."

Rosmer hied to the hill so fast,
As hind before the hart doth run ;
And when he came within the hill
Behold proud Ellenlile was gone.

But Ellenlile took Roland's hand,
'Midst sport and jest away they hied;
To young Roland she told her tale,
And Roland served her as a guide.

When Rosmer saw his love was gone,
So full was he of grief and dool,
He turned him into a huge grey rock,
And there he standeth like a fool.

LONDON :
Printed for THOMAS J. WISE, Hampstead, N.W.

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SIGNELIL

A TALE FROM THE CORNISH

AND OTHER BALLADS

BY

GEORGE BORROW

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SIGNELIL

THE Lady her handmaid to questioning took:
"Why dost thou so sickly and colourless look?"
But sorrow gnaws so sorely!

"'Tis little wonder if sickly I'm growing,
Malfred my lady!
So much am I busied with cutting and sewing."

"Erewhile was thy cheek as the blooming rose red,
But now thou art pale, even pale as the dead."

"To conceal the truth longer 'tis vain to essay,
My gallant young master has led me astray."

"And if the young noble has led thee astray,
Say, what gave he thee for thy virtue in pay?"

" He gave to me shoes were gold spangled all o'er,
And them have I worn with affliction so sore.

" He gave to me also of silk a soft shift,
And with sorrow most painful I've worn the fair gift.

" He gave me, Christ sain him! a gold ring so fine,
Whose match I can see on no finger of thine."

" But what will avail thee his presents of price,
If he thee will not wed before God and men's eyes?"

" O, he to espouse me so often has vowed,
And rich presents beside upon me has bestowed."

" What will his vows help thee in secrecy spoke?
To many a maid them he has made and has broke."

" O, I on the gold harp will play me a tune,
And the knight to his presence will summon me soon."

With her fingers so tapering she struck the first
chord,
That heard, as he dozed in his bed, the young
lord.

The gallant young lord to his waiting-boy said :
" Go straight, and call hither my mother's fair
maid."

The bedside he stroked with so gentle an air :
" Dear heart, sit thee down, for thy weight it will
bear."

" O no, by the Saints, I will never do that,
For there, noble Sir, I have ne'er before sat."

" Though thou ne'er hast placed thee upon my
bedside,
Thou hast slept in my arms embraced many a
tide.

" My spouse thou shalt be, yea, my heart's beloved
spouse,
And I in thine arms every night will repose."

A TALE FROM THE CORNISH

In Lavan's parish once of yore,
Dwelt on the spot called Tshei an Hor,
A loving couple, man and wife,
But poverty distressed their life.
And thus the man his wife address'd:
"I'll wander forth of work in quest;
And you, my dearest, you can earn
Your living here till I return."

His home he leaves, and, far from gay,
Towards the East he took his way.
At length a farmer's dwelling reaching,
He enter'd it, for work beseeching.

"What work canst do?" the farmer cried;
"All kinds of work, Sir," John replied.
Then straight they for a year agree,
Three pounds the wages were to be.

And when the year to end had come
The master paid him down the sum.
"John," said his master, "here's your fee;
But if you'll it return to me,
A point of wisdom I will teach you."
Said John: "Give it me, I beseech you."
"No, no, to give is not my way."
"Take it," said John, "and say your say."
Quoth t'other: "This in memory hold:
Ne'er for the new road leave the old."

They for another year agree,
The wages just the same to be;
And when the year its end had reached,
The farmer forth the three pounds fetched.
"John," said his master, "here's your fee,
But if you'll it return to me,

A point of wisdom I will teach you."
"Give it me, Sir, I do beseech you."
"For nought I will not speak, not I."
"Well, take it then," was John's reply.
Quoth t'other: "*Lodge not, for your life,*
With an old man who's a young wife."

For yet a year they then agree,
The wages still the same to be.
And when the year to end had roll'd,
The three pounds out the master told.
"John," said the master, "here's your fee;
But if you'll it return to me,
I'll the best point of wisdom learn you."
"For that, Sir, I'll the wage return you."
The farmer said: "*Take this advice,*
Ere striking once, bethink thee twice."

Now John would serve no longer there,
Home to his wife he would repair.
"Go not to-day," the farmer spake,
"To-morrow's my wife's day to bake;

She shall for you prepare a cake
Home to your faithful wife to take."

The nine pounds in the loaf they hid,
And when John them adieu had bid,
The farmer cried : " I pray thee carry
This present home unto your deary ;
And as ye two there merry make,
Then, and not till then, part the cake."

John turned him homeward from the door ;
And when he reach'd St. Eler's Moor,
He met three Tre-ryn merchants there
Returning home from Exeter.
" We're glad to see thee, John," they cried,
" Where hast thou been this long, long tide ? "
Says John : " Im just from service come,
And to my wife am journeying home."
" O travel with us," cried all three,
" And very welcome shalt thou be."

Before them two roads they behold ;
They took the new, John kept the old.

And as they passed by Keou Tshoy Un,
When they had just lost sight of John,
Thieves set upon them furiously,
Whereat they raised a doleful cry,
Which reaching John's ears on his rout,
" Murder ! " and " Thieves ! " he bellowed out.

His clamour scared the robber train,
Who from the merchants sped amain.
And when they came to Market Jew
They to their joy met John anew,
And cried : " What thanks we owe thee, John !
We had for certain, every one,
Been ruined people, but for thee,
Come with us, thou'lt most welcome be."

And when they reached the hostelrie
At which it was their wont to lie,
Quoth John : " The master I must view."
" The master ! what with him wouldst do ? "
They answered, " we've a mistress here,
And young enough she is, and fair ;

To see the host, if you're inclined,
Him in the kitchen you will find."

Into the kitchen John he goes,
And sees the master of the house,
An ancient man who turned the spit.
" O, ho ! " said John, " this house I quit ;
No sleeping place of it I'll make,
But in the next will quarters take."
" Do not go yet," they cried all three,
" Stay, sup with us, thou'lt welcome be."

And now, with grief and shame, I say
That with a friar of orders grey
The mistress had contrived a plan
To murder the poor ancient man,
When sleep had bound the merchants fast,
And on their heads the crime to cast.

John in the next house that same night
Saw through a hole i' the wall a light.
So getting up and gently walking,
He heard the friar and woman talking.

The friar said : " Against yon hole
My back I'll set, for fear some soul
From the next house our deeds should spy."

The hostess then most cruelly,
With a silk handkerchief she bore,
Murdered her ancient husband poor,
Strangled him did the accursed slut.
But meanwhile through the hole John cut
A round piece from the friar's gown,
And then in bed again lay down.

At morn ran out the hostess crying
That murdered was her husband lying ;
And since nor man nor child had been,
Except the merchants, in the inn,
They should be hanged withouten fail ;
They thereupon were led to jail.
John quickly them a visit paid.
" O, John ! we've evil luck," they said ;
" Last night the host was choked in bed,
And upon us the crime is laid."

"Dear gentlemen," was John's reply,
"Beseech the Justice instantly
To cause them who the murder wrought
Into his presence to be brought."

"But who knows who the deed has done?"
They faltered forth; then answered John:
"If I can't prove who did it, I
Will hang for it most willingly."

"Speak out," they cried. Said John: "Last night,
Being in bed, I saw a light;
I rose, as if I'd had a call—
There was a hole in the house wall,
'Gainst which his back a certain friar
Placed, thereby blinding it entire,
Lest, as he said, some curious eye
From the next house their deeds should spy.
I cut, meanwhile, to him unknown,
A large round piece from off his gown.
To prove that what I've said is true
I've in my pouch the piece to shew."

The merchants then were soon set free;
The murderers died on gallows tree.

All three depart from Market Jew,
Together with their comrade true,
Far as Kuz carn na Huila went,
And thence their ways lay different.
Now though the merchants earnest were
That John should with them home repair,
He steadfastly refused their plea,
Longing his wife and home to see.

When of the merchants he lost sight
He lounged away his time till night.
He'd fain know whether, while he roved
Abroad, his consort faithful proved.

Arrived, he listened at the door,
And heard a man's voice, he was sure,
Within the bed; his knife he drew,
Resolved to slay the guilty two.
But soon remembering the advice,
"*Ere striking once, bethink thee twice*,"

In hurry from the door he strode,
But soon returning knocked aloud.

"In name of God, who's there?" she cried;
"'Tis I am here, wife," John replied.
("Now in the name of blest Marie,
Whom heard I in her company?")
"If John thou art, pray enter free."
"First bring the light here," answered he.
'Twas brought, he stepped the threshold o'er.
Quoth he: "On coming to the door
I heard a man's voice in the bed."
"Ah, Johnny, when away you sped
In distant parts for work to roam,
I then with child was three months gone;
In bed there lies a comely boy,
Unto us both he'll be a joy."

Said John, "I've something to disclose.
My master, when I left his house,
Gave me this cake I have in hand,
And with it gave the strict command

When I with thee should merry make
Then and not till then it to break.
I'll now accomplish what he bade,
Mayhap we've wherefor to be glad."

They broke the cake in anxious haste,
The nine pounds in it, lo ! were placed.
They took the money, ate the bread,
And I for truth have heard it said
No quarrel e'er or noisy word
'Twixt them from that time forth occurr'd.

Now, Gentles all, my tale is done,
I hope it has your favour won !

SIR VERNER AND DAME INGEBORG

In Linholm's house
The swains they were drinking and making carouse.

The Dames ne'er could so gallant a prisoner keep in.

The swains they drank deep and they made themselves gay,
And so did Sir Verner in prison that lay.

Dame Ingeborg woke, and she lifts up her eyes:
"O, which of my maidens doth sing in that guise?"

"O, none of your maidens can sing in such guise,
'Tis Sir Verner who's singing, in durance he lies."

Dame Ingeborg straightway two servants addressed :

" To come to my presence Sir Verner request."

In through the portal Sir Verner he strode,
And up to receive him Dame Ingeborg stood.

To the cushion Dame Ingeborg points with a smile :

" Go thither, Sir Verner, and rest thee awhile.

" Now hark thou, Sir Verner, what I to thee say :
I beg thou wilt sing me a pretty love lay."

" A love lay I've never learnt up to this hour,
But I'll sing to oblige thee the best in my power."

Sir Verner began, and he sang such a lay,
That soon in deep slumber Dame Ingeborg lay.

The Dames and the maids fell to sleep and to doze,
Dame Ingeborg sank to a peaceful repose.

Sir Verner he glanced then so cautiously round,
The keys great and small in a nook he has found.

To the door hied Sir Verner as fast as he might,
He forgot to bid Dame Ingeborg a good-night.

When out of the castle himself he perceived,
His voice in a ditty again he upheaved.

Sir Verner he waved up his hat with delight:
"Dame Ingeborg bid ye a very good night!

"And hear thou, Sir Warden, who stand'st on
thy watch,
Of my ditty the burden I pray thee to catch.

"She'd this e'en not have taken a bushel of gold,
Now no penny for me shall she ever behold."

So fast to the door went Sir Verner the knight,
He forgot to bid Damsel or Lady good-night.

THE HEDDEBY SPECTRE[1]

At evening fall I chanced to ride,
My courser to a tree I tied.
So wide thereof the story goes.

Against a stump my head I laid,
And then to slumber I essay'd.
So wide thereof the story goes.

As soon as sleep had closed my eye,
The murdered man to me drew nigh.
So wide thereof the story goes.

"And if thy race to mine belongs,
I call thee to avenge my wrongs.
So wide thereof the story goes.

[1] An earlier, and utterly different, version of this ballad was printed in *Romantic Ballads*, 1826, pp. 37–39. Borrow afterwards described this earlier version as "a paraphrase."

"And thou to Heddeby shalt ride,
For there my kith and kin reside.
So wide thereof the story goes.

"My father dwells there, and my mother,
There dwell my sister and my brother.
So wide thereof the story goes.

"There Kirsten dwells, my lovely wife,
And it was she who took my life.
So wide thereof the story goes.

"Her sleeping husband stifled she,
With aid of cursed beldames three.
So wide thereof the story goes.

"Then in a truss of hay concealed,
They brought me forth to this wide field.
So wide thereof the story goes.

"The page I loved the best of all,
Now rides upon my courser tall.
So wide thereof the story goes.

"Eats daily with my silver knife,
And sleeps with Kirsten fair, my wife.
So wide thereof the story goes.

"He sitteth highest at the board,
My children tremble at his word.
So wide thereof the story goes.

"To them he gives so little bread,
And mocks them now that I am dead.
So wide thereof the story goes.

"He rides about the forest grounds,
And hunts the red deer with my hounds.
So wide thereof the story goes.

"Each time the caitiff slays a deer,
He wakes me in my grave so drear.
So wide thereof the story goes.

"But if I to him once repair,
With him 'twill sorely, sorely fare."
So wide thereof the story goes.

FROM GÖUDELI

YESTERE'EN when the bat, and the owl, and his mate,
Were holding discourse their small matters about ;
And the sun, that the wee little stars might shine out,
Had extinguished the lamp of his lustre so great.

A shepherd exclaimed : " O 'twas folly that I
My love should bestow upon one never kind,
Upon Siris the lovely, whose cold, cruel mind,
Would suffer unmoved a true lover to die.

"Often times, when our flocks on the common
did browse,
I'd approach her to pour in her ear my fond
vows,
But unto her companions to haste she was
sure.
O, light of my eyes! wouldst thou render me
blest,
And wouldst grant me two kisses on thy snowy
breast,
I swear that each one should an hour endure!"

PEASANT SONGS OF SPAIN

I.

When Jesu our Redeemer
To him the twelve did call,
By threes and fours he called them,
Till they were mustered all.

And when they all were mustered,
'Twas thus to them he spake:
"O which of ye, my children,
Will perish for my sake?"

Then, gazing on each other,
They stood abashed and still;
All save Saint John the Baptist,
And Peter of the Hill.

"We'll die for thee, O Jesus,
Upon to-morrow's morn."
For him died John the Baptist,
And suffered pain and scorn.

2.

There stands a stone, a rounded stone,
'Midst ocean's surges hoary,
On which sweet Jesus set his foot
When mounting to his glory.

There grows a rose, a blooming rose,
'Midst ocean's briny waters,
That o'er may pass, to hear the mass,
Havanah's dusky daughters.

LONDON:
Printed for THOMAS J. WISE, Hampstead, N.W.
Edition limited to Thirty Copies.

YOUNG SWAIGDER

OR

THE FORCE OF RUNES

AND OTHER BALLADS

BY

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YOUNG SWAIGDER

OR

THE FORCE OF RUNES

It was the young Swaigder,
With the little ball he played;
The ball flew into the Damsel's lap,
And pale her cheeks it made.

The ball flew into the Damsel's bower.
He went of it in quest;
Before he out of the bower came,
Much care had filled his breast!

"The ball, the ball thou shouldst not fling,
Shouldst cast it not at me;
There sits a maid in a foreign land,
She sighs and weeps for thee.

"Thou never more shalt peace obtain,
Or close in sleep thine eyes,
Till thou has freed the lovely maid,
In thrall for thee that lies."

It was the young Swaigder,
Placed his cap upon his head,
And into the high chamber
Unto his knights he sped.

"Here, quaffing mead from out the shell
Sit ye, my Courtmen bold,
Whilst I go to the mountain drear,
Speech with the Dead to hold!

"Here, quaffing mead and ruddy wine,
Sit ye my men so brave,
Whilst I go to the mountain drear,
With my mother speech to have!"

It was the young Swaigder,
And he began to call—
Riven were wall and marble stone,
And the hill began to fall.

" Who is it breaks my sleep,
And works me such annoy ?
Deep, deep below the earth so swart
Can I not peace enjoy ? "

" O, it is the young Swaigder,
The son thou lovest dear ;
He fain would good advice from thee,
His darling mother, hear.

" For I have now a step-mother,
So harsh she is of mood,
And she upon me Runes has cast
For a maid I ne'er have view'd.'

" I will give thee a noble horse,
Shall bear thee at thy need,
And he will run upon the sea
As on the verdant mead.

" And I will to thee a napkin give,
'Tis of Ager wool entire,
Before thee on the board shall stand,
What meat thou shalt desire.

"I will to thee a deer's horn give,
Mark well its golden gleam ;
All the drink thou wishest for,
From the golden horn shall stream.

"And I will give to thee a sword,
Hardened in Dragon's blood :
It will glitter like a beam
When thou ridest through the wood.

"I will give to thee a barque,
Its white sails silk shall be ;
Shall move as well on the verdant earth
As on the foaming sea."

Their silken sails on the gilded yard
So wide, so wide they spread ;
Away they sailed to the distant land,
Where dwelt the lovely maid.

And they have cast their anchors
Upon the yellow sand ;
It was the young Swaigder
Who stepped the first to land.

It was the young Swaigder,
His ship to the shore he steers ;
And the first man there that met him,
Was a man of many years.

It was then the ancient man
Was the first to make enquire :
"O, what is the name of the young swain
With the sword, and the look of fire ?"

"O, he is hight young Swaigder,
So wide his fame doth fly ;
And he for a maid is pining sore
On whom he ne'er set eye."

"There is within this land a maid,
Who pining long hath been
For a swain that hight is Swaigder,
And him she ne'er has seen."

"If longs she after a young swain
On whom she ne'er set eye,
And he is hight young Swaigder,
He is here in verity.

"Now do thou hear, thou ancient man,
If it as thou sayest be,
Become I King upon this land,
I'll make a Count of thee."

"'Midst of yonder verdant wood
Stands the castle of the maid;
The house is of gray marble stone,
The court with steel belaid.

"The house is of grey marble stone
The court with steel is floored,
The portal is of ruddy gold,
Twelve bears before it guard.

"In middle of the maiden's court
A linden spreads its shade,
If truly thou art Swaigder,
Hie forward unafraid."

Away then rode young Swaigder,
Cast towards the gate his eye;
And all the locks that before it hung,
Down fell they instantly.

Then withered the leaf, then withered the linden,
And the grass at the linden's root ;
And the twelve bears who the portal guard
They fell at the hero's foot.

When he came into the castle-court,
He smoothèd his array,
Then proudly up to the high, high hall
To the King he took his way.

" Hail to thee, hail to thee, heathen King,
Who dost at the wide board sit,
Wilt thou give me thy daughter fair ?
Return me an answer fit."

" I have no daughter, I have no daughter,
No daughter but one have I ;
And she so sorely longing
For a young swain doth lie.

" For a young swain whom she has never seen
My daughter longing lies ;
The swain he hight is Swaigder,
So far his fame it hies."

In went the little serving boy,
Wore a kirtle white to see:
"If thou dost long for Swaigder,
Know that hither come is he."

In then came the lovely maid,
In white silk clad was she:
"Now welcome, welcome my dearest heart,
Young Swaigder, welcome be!"

"Wilt thou consent baptized to be,
And the Christian faith receive,
And follow me to Denmark
With young Swaigder to live?"

"Willingly I baptized will be,
Will the Christian faith receive;
And will follow thee to Denmark,
Young Swaigder, with thee to live."

On a Thursday she baptizèd was,
She the Christian faith received;
On a Sunday they their bridal held,
And ever in peace they lived.

They kept their bridal feast for a day,
They kept the same for nine;
And there sat waiting the ancient man,
And through all of them did pine.

Be thanks to brave young Swaigder,
He kept so well his word;
A Knight he made of that ancient man,
Set him highest at the board.

Now joyful is young Swaigder,
His trouble all has fled;
He King became upon that land,
She Queen, when her sire was dead.

THE HAIL STORM[1]

As in Horunga haven
We fed the crow and raven,
I heard the tempest breaking
Of demon Thorgerd's waking;
Sent by the fiend in anger,
With din and stunning clangor;
To crush our might intended,
Gigantic hail descended.

A pound the smallest pebble
Did weigh, and others treble;
It drifted, dealing slaughter,
And blood ran out like water,

[1] This is a much later, and greatly improved, version of the ballad which first appeared in *Romantic Ballads*, 1826, pp. 136–138, and afterwards in *Targum*, 1835; pp. 42–43.

Ran reeking, red and horrid,
From battered cheek and forehead ;
But, though so rudely greeted,
No Jornsberg man retreated.

With anger ever sharper,
Thorgerda fierce, and Yrpr,
Shot lightning from each finger,
Which sped and did not linger.
Then sank our brave in numbers
To cold, eternal slumbers ;
There lay the good and gallant,
Renowned for warlike talent.

To bide the storm unable
Our chieftain hewed his cable,
And with his ship departed—
We follow, broken-hearted ;
For in Horunga haven
Our bravest feed the raven ;
We did our best, but no men
Can stand 'gainst hail and foemen.

ROSMER MEREMAN[1]

In Denmark once a lady dwelt,
  Hellelil the name she bore;
A castle new that lady built,
  It shone all Denmark o'er.

Her daughter dear was stolen away,
  She sought for her far and near;
The more she sought the less she found,
  To her great distress and care.

She bid a noble ship be built,
  Therein gilt masts did stand;
With valiant knights and courtmen bold
  She caused it to be manned.

[1] This ballad should be read in conjunction with *Rosmer*, printed in *The Mermaid's Prophecy, and other Songs relating to Queen Dagmar*, 1913, pp. 25–30.

Her sons she followed to the strand,
With many a fond caress;
For eight long years they sailed away,
Enduring much distress.

For eight years had they sailed away,
So long they thought the tide,
When they sailed before a lofty hill,
And straight to land they hied.

Then peeped the Damsel Swanelil
Forth from the mountain brow:
"O whence can be these stranger swains,
As guests that seek us now?"

The youngest brother then replied,
So ready of speech was he:
"A widow's three poor sons we are,
So long we've sailed the sea.

"Dame Hellelil our mother is,
We were born on Denmark's ground;
From us our sister stolen was,
And her we have yet not found."

"If thou wert born on Danish ground,
And Dame Hellelil be thy mother
Then I thy beloved sister am
And thou art my youngest brother.

"Now do thou hear, my youngest brother,
Why didst not at home remain?
If thou hadst a thousand thousand lives
Thou none of them couldst retain."

She placed him in the smallest nook
She could in the house espy:
She bade him for sake of the highest God,
Neither to laugh nor cry.

Rosmer came from the ocean home,
And straight he fell to bann:
"O I can smell by my right hand
That here is a Christian man."

"A Bird with a dead man's shank in its mouth,
Chanced over our house to fly;
He cast it in, I cast it out,
And that full speedily."

A noble meal she then prepared,
And she gave him many a kiss:
"O here is come my sister's son,
It would grieve me him to miss.

"My sister's son is here arrived
From the land where I first drew breath;
Now give him, my lord, thy firm, firm oath,
Thou'lt do unto him no scathe."

"If here has come thy sister's son
From the native land of both,
To do him ne'er any kind of hurt,
I swear by my highest oath."

It was the lofty Rosmer King
To two serving swains did call:
"Bid ye proud Swanelil's sister's son
Attend me in the hall."

It was Swanelil's sister's son,
Before Rosmer should appear;
His heart it fluttered, his body it shivered,
He stood in such mighty fear.

Then took Rosmer her sister's son,
Placed him upon his knee ;
He stroked him so tenderly on the face
That 'twas yellow and blue to see.

Then answered proud Dame Swanelil :
"Thou forget'st, Sir Rosmer, mayhap,
Thou hast not fingers small enough
To stroke so little a chap."

And he was there till the years were five,
Then he longed for his native land :
"Now cause, O sister Swanelil,
That I'm set on the yellow strand."

It was proud Dame Swanelil
'Fore Rosmer goes to stand ;
"The swain so long has been by the sea,
That he sighs for his native land."

"If the swain has been so long by the sea
That he sighs for his native land,
I will give him a chest of gold,
To be subject to his hand."

"Wilt thou give him a chest of gold,
To be subject to his hand?
Hear thou now, my noble heart's dear,
Take him to his native land."

It was proud Dame Swanelil,
So cunning a trick she played;
She took thereout the ruddy gold all,
And herself in the chest she laid.

He took the man upon his back,
And the chest in his mouth he's ta'en;
And so he went the long, long way
Across the land and the main.

"Now have I borne thee to thy land,
Thou seest both sun and moon;
I conjure thee by the highest God
Name Swanelil to none."

Rosmer sprang into the sea amain,
The water splashed to the sky;
And when he came to the mountain home
No Swanelil could he spy,

When he came to the mountain home
  Gone was the belov'd of his heart ;
He sprang so wild about the hill,
  And changed to a flint rock swart.

There was rejoicing in Hellelil's court,
  They rejoiced in many a way ;
Back to their friends her children are come,
  Who had been so long away.

THE WICKED STEPMOTHER

No. II.[1]

Sir Peter o'er to the island strayed—
All underneath a linden wide.
He weds Mettelil, so fair a maid—
In such peril with her through the forest ride.

Bracelets of gold he given her hath,
That fills his mother's breast with wrath.

"If thou wed a maid against my desire,
With her first babe she shall expire!"

He weds her and home he her has ta'en,
To meet her his mother will not deign.

[1] This ballad should be compared with *The Wicked Stepmother*, printed in *The Dalby Bear and Other Ballads*, 1913, pp. 14–20.

When they together a year had dwelt,
Herself with child proud Mettelil felt.

Out and in they Mettelil bear,
Death has to her approached so near.

"Since neither live nor die I may,
Take me whence a maid ye brought me away."

Thereto the Stepmother made reply,
She was tow'rds her disposed maliciously:

"The horses graze upon the mead,
And the coach swains heavy they sleep in bed."

Sir Peter he stood a little apart,
Mettelil has so grieved his heart.

The coach to her country was turned in haste,
And the horses before it were quickly placed.

And when they came to the verdant moor,
Her chariot broke into pieces four.

"What mighty crime can I have done,
That my own coach 'neath me will not run?"

Sir Peter at no great distance hied,
He was so near he all espied.

"We forthwith will find a remedy,
Thou shalt ride and walk will I."

"Each noble Dame will know how fit,
I am in this plight in the saddle to sit."

Proud Mettelil came to her father's abode,
Her father abroad to receive her strode.

"Welcome, Mettelil, daughter mine,
How speedest thou with that burden of thine?"

"So speeding am I, such plight I am in,
That upon this earth no rest can I win."

Little Kirsten a may was of goodness rife,
Dearly she loved her brother's wife.

She to her brother was true of heart,
Of wax two babes she formed with art.

She wrapt them up in the linen fair,
And took them beneath her cloak with care.

She took them beneath her cloak with care,
And them to her mother she straightway bare.

"My dearest mother, no longer grieve,
The babes of your son in your arms receive."

"Has Mettelil forth these little sons brought?
Then my dark Runes have availed nought.

"Air and earth I have spelled, save the spot alone,
The little spot, my chest stood upon.

"Oh I enchanted have as wide
As she could either walk or ride.

"I have enchanted both earth and wood,
Save the spot whereon my chest it stood."

No sooner she the words had said,
Than proud Mettelil on the place was laid.

And when she had come where stood the chest,
Straight of two sons was she released.

That Sir Peter's mother so mortified,
Full quickly of rage and spite she died.

London:
Printed for THOMAS J. WISE, Hampstead, N.W.

Edition limited to Thirty Copies